







# THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA





"WHENEVER A PRIZE WAS CAPTURED SHE HAD TO  
SENT OFF AT ONCE TO THE NEAREST PORT."





# THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

BY

HENRY NEWBOLT

AUTHOR OF "ADMIRALS ALL," "THE ISLAND RACE"  
"THE YEAR OF TRAFALGAR," ETC.

WITH 8 COLOURED PLATES AND 32 ILLUSTRATIONS  
IN BLACK AND WHITE BY  
NORMAN WILKINSON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.  
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON  
FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK  
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS  
1914

All rights reserved



*To*  
*Sir Horace and Lady Smith-Dorrien*  
*for the use of*  
*Three Young Englishmen*

## THE SONG OF THE LARBOARD BERTH

When moonlight flecks the cruiser's decks  
And engines rumble slow,  
When Drake's own star is bright above  
And Time has gone below,  
They may hear who list the far-off sound  
Of a long-dead never-dead mirth,  
In the mid watch still they may hear who will  
The song of the Larboard Berth.

*In a dandy frigate or a well-found brig,  
In a sloop or a seventy-four,  
In a great First-rate with an Admiral's flag,  
And a hundred guns or more,  
In a fair light air, in a devil foul wind,  
At midnight or midday,  
Till the good ship sink her mids shall drink  
To the King and the King's Highway!*

The mids they hear—no fear, no fear!  
They know their own ship's ghost:  
Their young blood beats to the same old song  
And roars to the same old toast.  
So long as the sea-wind blows unbound  
And the sea-wave breaks in spray,  
For the Island's sons the word still runs  
"The King, and the King's Highway!"

HENRY NEWBOLT.

August 1914.

## PREFACE

THE stories in this book are not fiction, for every page of them is a record of fact. But neither are they history, in the ordinary sense of that dry word; they are pictures of real naval life in the days of Nelson, pictures of sea service and sea fights as they looked at the moment to those for whom they were not yet historical events, but fresh personal adventures. And they are seen through the eyes of boys—not entirely, because boys grow up and are promoted, but each one of them is the record of a boy's career from the moment of his first going to sea. To these is added the story of Trafalgar, which gives meaning and unity to all the rest of that period; and this account of the battle is the first published since the report of the recent Admiralty Committee.

Of the five boys' records, the most intimate are—for reasons which may easily be guessed—those of Charles and Basil; they illustrate in detail the lot of the midshipman of 1805. The story of Franklin also begins with Nelson's battles, but carries on to the first great Arctic voyages; then comes the career of Edward Pellew, which stretches from the days of brilliant frigate actions to the last heavy fighting with a wooden fleet; and that of Farragut, which is even more remarkable, for it begins with the sails



## viii THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

and masts and 18-pounders of the *Essex* and ends with the armour-plates and 11-inch guns of modern war. But in all the purpose is the same—to tell not merely what happened, but what happened to the boy who was there, and by marking his adventures, his feelings, and his character, to revive if possible the influence of his young courage, his joy in life, and his devotion to the service of his country.

# CONTENTS

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| THE ADVENTURES OF CHARLES.                   |      |
| I. THE <i>LITTLE AMIABLE</i> . . . . .       | 1    |
| 1. Leaving Home in 1805 . . . . .            | 1    |
| 2. The White Ensign . . . . .                | 6    |
| 3. Missing Trafalgar . . . . .               | 11   |
| II. THE BRIGHT <i>MEDUSA</i> . . . . .       | 22   |
| 1. The Young Prizemaster . . . . .           | 22   |
| 2. The Siege of Monte Video . . . . .        | 33   |
| III. THE BOLD <i>MENEZES</i> . . . . .       | 40   |
| 1. A Dandy Frigate . . . . .                 | 40   |
| 2. The Taking of Mauritius . . . . .         | 50   |
| 3. Polishing Cape Sicie . . . . .            | 57   |
| 4. San Stefano . . . . .                     | 71   |
| 5. The Golden Galleon . . . . .              | 84   |
| 6. Sir Peter Parker's Last Fight . . . . .   | 96   |
| THE ADVENTURES OF BASIL.                     |      |
| 1. The Mids. of the <i>Leander</i> . . . . . | 104  |
| 2. A Tailor and Some Whalers . . . . .       | 117  |
| 3. Good Dog Shakings . . . . .               | 121  |
| 4. Pigs in Mourning . . . . .                | 127  |

# x THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

## THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN. PAGE

1. A Boy in Two Great Battles . . . . 136
2. How Franklin Sailed Away for Ever . . . 155
3. The Search for Franklin . . . . . 164

## TRAFALGAR.

1. The Plan of Attack . . . . . 189
2. Preparing for Battle . . . . . 196
3. The Signals . . . . . 200
4. Collingwood's Battle . . . . . 206
5. Nelson's Battle . . . . . 213
6. The French Counter-stroke . . . . . 220
7. The Death of Nelson . . . . . 224

## THE ADVENTURES OF EDWARD PELLEW.

1. "He never thought twice about it" . . . 231
2. A Captain and his Orders . . . . . 236
3. The First Fight of the War . . . . . 241
4. The Flying Squadron . . . . . 244
5. Honours without Asking . . . . . 251
6. A Nest of Pirates . . . . . 256
7. Firing them out . . . . . 261

## THE ADVENTURES OF DAVID FARRAGUT.

1. The Youngest Mid. of all . . . . . 271
2. The Hard Fate of the *Essex* . . . . . 278
3. A Question of Loyalty . . . . . 287
4. Mobile Bay—The Forts and the Fleets . . 291
5. The Fight in the Channel . . . . . 296
6. The Fight in the Bay . . . . . 302

# ILLUSTRATIONS

## COLOURED PLATES

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| "Whenever a prize was captured she had to be sent<br>off at once to the nearest port" | <i>Frontispiece</i> |
| "There's your ship, sir, and good luck with her"                                      | PAGE 31             |
| "The whole party of us were ordered to the mast-head as<br>punishment"                | 132                 |
| "The sea was lit by the red light of the burning wrecks"                              | 144                 |
| "The <i>Erebus</i> and <i>Terror</i> sailed away"                                     | 164                 |
| "Daylight was fading fast"  | 224                 |
| "Were able to grab the French ensign and tear it away"                                | 252                 |
| "For twenty-one days she struggled with furious gales and<br>heavy seas"              | 276                 |

## ILLUSTRATIONS IN TEXT

|  |    |
|--|----|
| "They were spoken by the <i>African</i> "              | 12 |
| "There lay four ships of the line"                     | 17 |
| "Charles saw a real live prize bring to"               | 30 |
| "He sent Charles with a special introduction"          | 43 |
| "Lying at Hamouze fitting for sea"                     | 46 |
| "There were no less than fifty sail in sight"          | 52 |
| "For the five days and nights the chase lasted"        | 62 |
| "The topmen were already lashing her wounded topmast"  | 68 |
| "He took the dead midshipman in his arms"              | 81 |
| "Gave them her broadside repeatedly as they passed in" | 92 |

## xii THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| "Standing alone on his own side of the deck" . . . . .                      | 95   |
| "Looking at the Indiamen coming up the river" . . . . .                     | 109  |
| "The whale looked very big and formidable as they approached him" . . . . . | 120  |
| "Passed in review under the very nose of our superiors" . . . . .           | 131  |
| "The good sense to admire his young brother's dirk" . . . . .               | 139  |
| "And sent out their boats to place fresh buoys" . . . . .                   | 141  |
| "In the morning the crews managed to land" . . . . .                        | 147  |
| "She was compelled to drift out of action" . . . . .                        | 151  |
| "They also met their first icebergs" . . . . .                              | 161  |
| "According to Arctic custom the colours were hoisted" . . . . .             | 172  |
| "Suddenly came on a human skeleton half buried in the snow" . . . . .       | 181  |
| "The frigates were still hanging on to the enemy" . . . . .                 | 193  |
| "Captain Harvey, I'll thank you to keep . . ." . . . .                      | 205  |
| "She had to run the gauntlet of the whole of the enemy's van" . . . . .     | 219  |
| "God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never speak to you again" . . . . .      | 227  |
| "On the yardarm standing on his head" . . . . .                             | 233  |
| "Overboard he went himself in full dress" . . . . .                         | 240  |
| "Coming down on the splinter netting" . . . . .                             | 249  |
| "And shake his scimitar at the ship with useless rage" . . . . .            | 263  |
| "The others decided that he must fight for it" . . . . .                    | 286  |
| "Sent up a seaman with a rope to lash the Admiral to the rigging" . . . . . | 299  |
| "Hoisted a white flag" . . . . .  | 306  |

# THE ADVENTURES OF CHARLES

## I

### THE "LITTLE AMIABLE"

#### 1. LEAVING HOME IN 1805

IN the spring of 1805, the year of Trafalgar, Charles was eleven and a half, and he was going into the Navy. That had been settled in his own mind for a long time, and now it was settled in fact. In those days going into the Navy was not managed quite as it is at present. It is true that there was a Naval Academy at Gosport, something like Osborne, but it was on a small scale, and most boys went in by a different entrance; they were taken to sea on trial, as it were, by a captain who happened to be friendly. They were entered on the ship's books as first-class volunteers; a captain might take any number up to a dozen, according to the size of his ship, and a volunteer who got on well, and meant to stick to the Service, would be promoted before the end of his second year to the rank of midshipman, and begin to draw pay as an officer. Not that the pay was much—his father would still have to give him an allowance—but there was always a chance of prize-money, and in a boy's mind that counted for a lot.

## 2 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

The captain who had offered to take Charles was the Honourable Duncombe Pleydell-Bouverie, a very young man to command a ship, for he was not yet twenty-five. But he had been a good lieutenant, and he was also the son of Jacob, Earl of Radnor, who was a friend of Mr. Pitt, the Prime Minister, and had a brother on the Navy Board. So he was given H.M. frigate *L'Aimable*, 32 guns, a beautiful ship captured from the French, who up to that time built better than we did. She kept her French name, but it was too French for her new masters; her own crew called her *Lame-able*, and the rest of the Service spoke of her as "the *Little Amiable*." She was indeed "little" according to our ideas—under eight hundred tons.

Now I must remind you of what was going on in Europe at this time. During the whole of Charles's life England had been at war with France, and part of the time with Holland; and now Spain had joined with France. You may imagine how a boy of that generation must have had his head full of victories. When the battle of St. Vincent was fought Charles was only three and a half, but he soon knew all about Nelson; and then came Camperdown, when Duncan broke the Dutch line once for all, and the Nile, where Nelson battered the French at anchor all night, and Copenhagen, the most dangerous of his battles, where he fought in a narrow channel, with two ships aground, and every chance of being unable to get his fleet away—if the Danes had not given in just in time. That was four years ago, and now for a year past Bonaparte had been drilling an enormous army at Boulogne, with a flotilla of boats to bring them over to England—

if only he could clear the seas of the British fleet, and get the command of the Channel. But the Admiralty were looking after that, and there were squadrons watching each of the three French fleets, to catch them when they tried to join together and make for England. Since January Nelson had been chasing one of these fleets—the one commanded by Admiral Villeneuve—and in May, when Villeneuve bolted to the West Indies, he hunted him there and back, till he once more took refuge in a Spanish port. That was quite successful; but Nelson was disappointed, because he had hoped for a fight—he was not content with merely bottling up the enemy. So he came home rather disheartened; but everyone could see that the game was not over yet, and the dockyards and roads were full of ships fitting out for active service.

The *Little Amiable* was one of them, for Nelson was always wanting more frigates, and grumbling because he could not get enough. He used to call them "the eyes of the fleet," because they could go ahead, like the modern fast cruisers, and do the scouting, and come back to report what they had seen of the enemy. When he came home to England in August, *L'Amiable* had already been commissioned three weeks before, but she was not ready to sail till late in September, after Nelson himself had gone out again to the fleet.

Near the end of July, then, you must picture Charles leaving home proudly "to join his ship." There is no use trying to conceal the fact that he was proud; he was too excited to conceal it himself. He knew nothing of the life or duties he was going to begin, but he knew that England depended entirely



## 4 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

upon the Navy—in those days nobody could forget that—and he felt quite sure that whenever English and French met in a fair fight the English must win or die. Any other little hardships did not matter. You may think he was too cocksure; but it is not a bad thing to begin life confidently, and, as a matter of fact, when it came to roughing it, he never lost heart or grumbled to those at home.

You may like to know what kind of a home it was that he was leaving. His father was a doctor, who afterwards became well known on the Continent, and had kings and queens for his patients. But that was after Waterloo; at present he was only a young and ambitious man, with a good practice in a country town in Berkshire. He owed a good deal to the friendship of Lord Radnor, who gave him, and two of his sons after him, commissions in his own regiment, the Royal Berkshire Militia, and not only sent Charles to sea with his own son, but was always ready to help him in after life.

Charles's mother was a Devonshire woman, who could tell any number of sea-stories, and was glad to have a son serving his country in the Navy, though she knew well enough what the chances were for her. Except for two very short Christmas leaves she only once had Charles at home again, when he was nearly sixteen, and came ashore for four months. It was six more years before the war was over, and by then it was too late, for she died in 1811, when her youngest son was born.

And now about her children—there were ten of them altogether, but the three youngest boys were born after Charles went away, so that there were at

present only six brothers and sisters to say good-bye to. William, the eldest, was thirteen—he was going to be a doctor, like his father. Frank was ten, and would think of nothing but the Army. The little girls were all under seven—Anne, Caroline, Molly-Maria, and baby Jane—they could not be supposed to understand much about going to sea, but they were very fond of their brother, and would miss him when he was gone. Then there were the animals—the doctor's horses, the boys' own pony, Seug the spaniel, and Ponto the pointer, young dogs whom Charles had been helping to train, and the new hutch of rabbits which William had only just started. Then came packing and bed-time, and a last half hour with his mother, his eyes rather shiny in the twilight, and a great deal to say, and most of it never said; and early next morning his father drove away with him to meet the coach for Salisbury.

The journey was long and rather tiring; he had never before travelled so far at one stretch, and none of the people he met knew that he was going to sea in a smart frigate. He was half afraid that his father would speak of it in public, but still more disappointed that he never did. Altogether it was a long dusty day. But Longford Castle made up for everything. He had never seen any castle before, except Windsor, and that was more like a town than a house. But here there were not only great round towers, but polite servants, and a place to put your hat and coat, and a kind hostess, and Charles's own captain, whom he knew a little already, and Captain Philip, whom he had seen once at Reading with the regiment, and another Mr. Bouverie, and Lord

## 6 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

Folkestone, whose little girl was just Molly-Maria's age, and, above all, Lord Radnor himself, who treated Charles like a man, and asked him questions about old earthworks, and drank port wine with him at dinner, and gave him next morning, when he went away, a pigskin purse with golden guineas in it, and looked the other way when he saw him rather choked at parting from his father.

The captain took Charles in his own chaise to Portsmouth, and gave him an hour to buy his dirk and order his uniform. Then they went off to the frigate together, and Charles's adventures had begun.

### 2. THE WHITE ENSIGN

I shall not stop now to tell you what he thought of everything on board. Of course it was very queer to find that the cockpit, where he was to live for the next six years, was almost pitch-dark, and had not even a port-hole that could be opened, for it was down below the water-line. And of course it was a little cramped to have only one oak chest for wardrobe, dressing-table, washing-stand, easy chair and writing-desk. And it was difficult at first to manage your hammock, and go off to sleep quickly with noises overhead, and the ceiling close down upon your nose, and the air thick with the odours of tar, cheese, tallow-candles, rum, and bilgewater. Some writers have made a great deal out of these discomforts; they talk as if life in the midshipmen's berth must have been miserable and degrading. But, then, another thing they criticise is the way the mids were incessantly talking, singing, ragging, and playing

practical jokes. That doesn't sound as if they were very unhappy. I believe the truth is that they were healthy and full of good spirits, and never made the mistake of supposing that you must be comfortable before you can be happy. Also a good many of them were keen to get on in their profession, and when you are in that mood you are not thinking about the size of your washing-basin. Charles was one of this kind. He was aware that things were a bit rough, but pleased to find that they were not rougher than he could stand. In his letters he told his mother just that, and no more; not a word about bullying or bilgewater. What really did fill his mind was the talk he overheard in the mess, and the articles he read in the papers that now and then came down there (rather high-sounding stuff about our country's wrongs, and the wickedness of the French), and the chances of soon getting some fighting, and prize-money, and promotion. And what really did worry him in those first few days was that there was so much to be done on board, and not a thing that he could do to be of any use. He spent a good deal of time going round with two or three other boys, looking at the big guns, and fingering the muskets and cutlasses, and boarding pikes and pistols, in the stands between the decks. One morning the gunner took him down to the powder-magazines in the ship's hold and explained to him, very seriously, how the cartridges were served out and carried up to the guns when they were in action. He was made to empty all his pockets and put on felt slippers before he went down the ladder; the floor and walls of the magazines were lined with felt too, lest anything should acci-

## 8 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

dentally strike a spark. The only light came from lanterns locked up in separate little rooms with double glass windows. The sight of all these precautions gave him a sense of danger such as he had never felt before; his heart thumped, and as he stared at the cartridges standing ready in their wooden tubs, he began to imagine different ways in which they might blow up in spite of all. Then he suddenly realised that he was standing exactly underneath the midshipmen's berth in the after cockpit. The gunner saw him glance upwards. "Ay," he said, "you young gentlemen are a bit the nearest, but it's the same for all. You'll remember the *Mercédès*, I suppose, sir?"

Charles did remember—the *Mercédès* was a Spanish frigate, one of the treasure fleet taken by our ships the autumn before, and she had blown up in the action. There were women and children on board, too; every soul perished.

The gunner let Charles pass out; then he locked the door very carefully, and tried it twice, saying as he did so, "There's enough there to take *ten* ships' companies to heaven." After that he went off to return the keys to the captain.

In another day or two Charles had seen everything that was to be seen on board, and began to find his time dragging rather heavily. When he had been across to Portsmouth, and brought back his new uniform, he felt quite depressed at having nothing to do and no one to command. Fortunately, at that moment the captain remembered his existence, and asked him to dinner. He was very good at talking to boys, because, like his father, he treated them seriously, and did not chaff them all the

time. He soon found out what was troubling Charles, and he gave him a piece of advice, namely, to think less about fighting, and more about sailing. "The men will work the guns," he said; "it is our business to work the ship; the officer who can do that is the one who will rise." Then he explained that whenever a prize was captured she had to be sent off at once to the nearest port, and this was always done by putting a capable midshipman on board, with a prize crew of a few men, to take her in. The mid who could be trusted to do this was on the high road to promotion; in fact, he was already a captain in a small way, so long as his little voyage lasted.

Charles saw the point of that, and jumped at the captain's suggestion that he should have a lesson in sailing from the master's mate. He still hoped privately to board an enemy's ship with pistol in hand, but for the next fortnight he was out all day in a small sailing boat, running up or down between St. Helen's and the Needles, looking jealously at all the battleships, and sometimes, though it was calm August weather, getting into difficulties in the race of the Solent.

As time went on the interest became greater. Early one morning two fresh ships dropped anchor at Spithead, after saluting Admiral Montague in the *Royal William*; they were the *Victory* and the old *Superb*. Every glass was turned upon them, and Charles was off like a shot in his boat to get a nearer look. But Lord Nelson was invisible from the sea level, and in the afternoon the two ships weighed anchor again and went on towards the Motherbank.

## 10 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

And now very exciting news began to arrive. On the 25th of August the French suddenly broke up their great camp at Boulogne; no one at first knew why. Then it became known that Admiral Villeneuve had given up the idea of facing the British fleet, and had run away down the coast of Spain and shut himself into Cadiz. It was all over with the invasion of England, and Bonaparte marched away in a rage. At Spithead no one doubted that Nelson would soon be after Villeneuve again, and the captains strained every nerve to complete their crews in order to have a chance of going with him. *L'Aimable* was very short-handed, and consequently everyone on board was very short tempered.

In a few days the *Victory* came back, and anchored off St. Helen's. On the 1st of September she hoisted the Blue Peter, the signal that she had orders to sail, but there was nothing to show who was going out in her. A week more, and the report came that Lord Nelson was definitely appointed. Then on the 13th an Admiralty despatch fell like a red-hot shot into the *Little Amiable*. She was ordered to convoy a fleet of merchant ships out to Lisbon. That was not going with Nelson; but, on the other hand, it was going in the right direction, and it was a very short business. It might mean the best of luck or the worst; no one knew, and everyone argued. Next day was even more exciting; the great Admiral himself reached Portsmouth at six in the morning; the whole place went mad with enthusiasm. At two the same afternoon his barge put off from the shore; the crowd beat down the bayonets of the guard and rushed into the sea to wave good-bye to him. But

the last cheers he received were from the ships that he passed on his long row out to St. Helen's, and you may be sure that if Charles ever shouted in his life he shouted then.

That was a day indeed. The same evening came news of Lord Nelson's order, the last he wrote before he sailed. "His Majesty's ship *L'Aimable* will proceed with the Lisbon convoy, and join me on my rendezvous the moment the service is performed." The captain came on deck, very coolly, with the paper in his hand. "The White Ensign, gentlemen," he said. Nothing more was needed; the ships that flew the White Ensign were the ships of Nelson's fleet.

### 3. MISSING TRAFALGAR

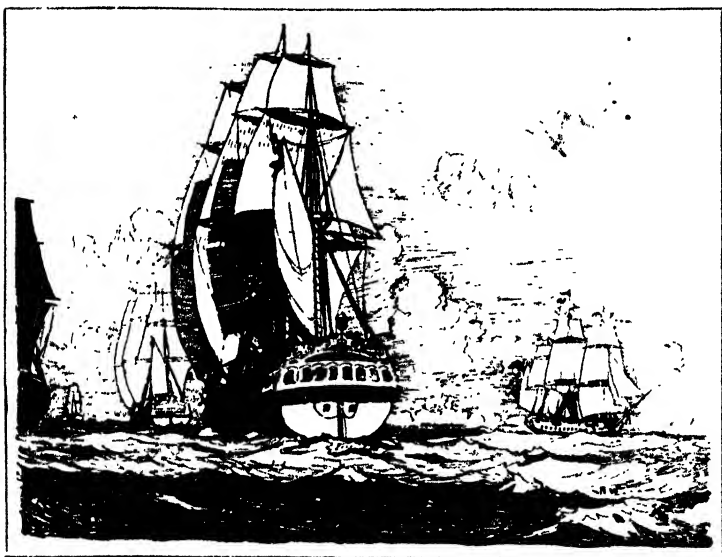
The convoy kept them waiting some time longer, and they got very impatient as other ships put to sea before them. The *Kuryalus* sailed with the *Victory*; the *Ajax* and *Thunderer* joined them off Plymouth; the *Royal Sovereign* and *Defiance* sailed on the 25th, then the *Leriathan*, *Belleisle*, and *Africa*, as well as two other frigates; and the *Agamemnon* was all but ready.

The *Little Amiable* actually started on the 22nd, but it was several days before she got her convoy under way, and began to hustle them southwards. What she had to do was rather like the work of a sheep-dog, for there were thirty-three ships in the convoy, some of them were larger than herself, and none of them were good at obeying signals or manœuvring together like a fleet. They were unlucky, too, in their weather, and were every night in danger of



## 12 . THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

being scattered. However, they got on fairly well for five or six days, and Charles had quite found his sea legs, when something happened which made him realise that he was no longer at a safe distance hearing about war, but actually in the middle of it. They were spoken by the *African*, who told them



"They were spoken by the *African* "

that "the Rochefort Squadron was out." That meant that the French Admiral, Allemand, had come out of the harbour of Rochefort, either to try and join Villeneuve, or to cut off Nelson's reinforcements as they came in ones and twos from England. Captain Bouverie knew that that must be stopped; he wrote a hasty letter to the Admiralty, and sent it home by

one of his store ships. Then he sailed on southwards, to run his convoy through.

He very nearly did it; it was the closest thing possible. By the morning of the 10th they were actually past the French squadron, when about nine o'clock they saw a battleship to windward, with several others further away. The near ship looked English, and Captain Bouverie tacked in her direction; then she began to fire guns, and he thought she must be French. In any case, the other ships were, and they were bearing up for his convoy. There was nothing for it but to fly, and they all flew. The near ship turned out to be the *Agamemnon*, which had sailed a week after *L'Aimable*, and those two, after being chased by six line-of-battleships for seventy miles, got away in company. The convoy, like a covey of partridges when they have lost the old birds, were soon scattered, and, in the end, four of them were captured. Even after Trafalgar we used to lose five merchant ships every three days, and the French of course many more. You cannot make war without losing trade. Five days afterwards the two ships came into the fleet and reported themselves to Lord Nelson. It was now possible to send letters home, and this is what Charles wrote to his mother:

H.M. SHIP "*L'AIMABLE*,"

October 15, 1805.

DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you are all well at home and I am sure will be very glad to hear from me, but you were very near losing me on the 10th of this month for we were chased by the French Squadron and were very near being come up with, but we cut

## 14 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

away two of our boats and one anchor and hove two or three hundred shot overboard, there were 9 in number we saw them about 9 o'clock in the morning and we tacked ship and went after them but we soon found them out to be the wrong sort H.M. Ship *Agamemnon* was chased the day before from four o'clock, and was within Pistol shot of them, she discovered 6 line of battleships and one three decked ship. We thought her to be a french ship she was so far to windward that had she been a french ship we could not have escaped her. She began to fire a great number of guns when we first saw the Squadron to alarm us and our convoy, we made signal to our convoy that an Enemy was in sight they all bore up for our convoy but one 74 which chased us and came up with us very fast. We were so deep we could not sail until we staved 9 Butts of water and pumped it out and cut the Boats adrift besides all there was a very heavy squall came and we had all sails set were very near going down, she laid down on her beam ends for several minutes. We are all jolly and hearty, Thank God but I believe the convoy are taken though we saved ourselves. We was obliged to run for it we depended on our sailing, she is a famous ship for sailing not many ships can come up with her. We have had a gale of wind that blew hard enough only to permit us to carry two top sails close reefed and a terrible heavy sea on, I have not been sick but one day that I dined in the Gun Room where she rolled about very much, Captain Bouverie would have run the ship on shore if the *Agamemnon* had come within gunshot of us, not knowing what she was, as we were close by Cape Finista. The Land

was in sight but we found out the *Agamemnon* by private signals, she made a private signal to us and we answered it she hoisted her number, and we showed our number, and she hoisted the signal that she had some news of very great importance to communicate, so you see ships at sea can talk to one another a great way off. She would have sent us to England had we not sent a store ship we had with us, we joined Lord Nelson on the 13th and we are now going to Malta with 150 casks of Dollars each containing 5000, that is a good sum for the Soldiers at Malta, another frigate is going with us with as many dollars on board. It is beautiful to see Lord Nelson's fleet, I hope I shall be able to give you more account of them when I have been longer with them. How are the rabbits and Ponto and Seug?

Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. Webb and all my friends.

I am able to stand a Sailor's life and I hope to conduct myself as an Officer in the British Navy, do not fret about me for if you cared no more for the french than I, you would care very little about them.

Give my love to my Father, Brothers and Sisters. Success to William and his rabbits. Dear Mother, I remain, your ever affectionate Son, CHARLES.

The captain of the *Agamemnon*, Sir Edward Berry, also wrote an account of this famous chase, and it agrees very closely indeed with this letter; so it is plain that Charles, though he could not spell Finisterre, was by no means a bad writer for

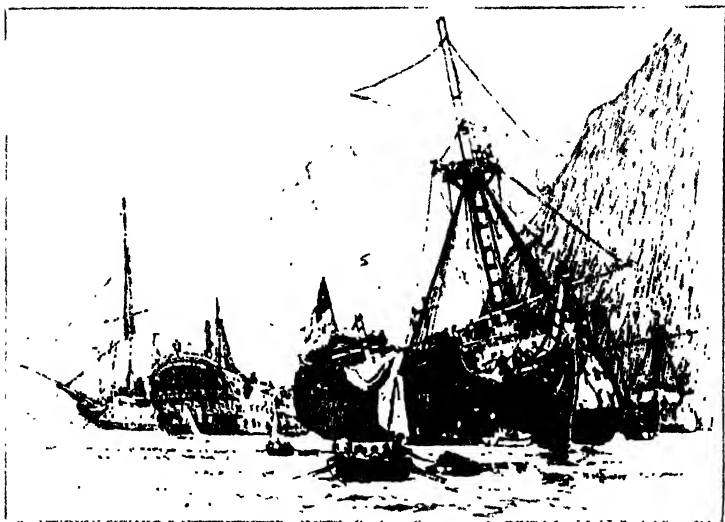
## 16 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

his age. There is, at any rate, one sentence that we should all like to have had the chance of writing: "It is beautiful to see Lord Nelson's fleet." There is great beauty in the curves of a modern battleship, and her huge mass, sometimes sharp and sometimes shadowy, and in the perfection with which she keeps station, and obeys the signal in spite of wind or water; but sails at sea are the most beautiful of all man's inventions, and not even a flight of aeroplanes will ever look so fine as the Trafalgar fleet in the days before the battle.

Charles hoped, of course, that he was going to have the joy of seeing that fleet in action. He knew that he could not possibly get any of the fighting—the mess had already explained to him that in a general action frigates were only used for signalling and towing wounded ships. It was not etiquette for a ship of the line to fire at a frigate, so long as she claimed the benefit of the rule by not firing herself. Still, as Charles knew by this time, firing or standing fire is not the only way of serving your country, and he longed for the little *Amiable* to be present at a big battle, and do her part with the other frigates.

In the meantime the French gave signs of being very unwilling to come out, and there was the captured Spanish gold to be taken to Malta. It had been in the *Royal Sovereign* and *Defiance*, and when Captain Durham of the *Defiance* asked what he was to do with these troublesome casks, Lord Nelson, who had no frigates to spare just then, replied, "If the Spaniards come out, fire the dollars at them, and pay them off in their own coin!" But

now that *L'Aimable* had arrived, he divided the money between her and the *Amphion*. They were to sail together to Gibraltar, and from there *L'Aimable* was to go on with another frigate, the *Renommée*, and take a convoy to Malta. You may be sure that they lost no time, going or coming, but when they reached Gibraltar, on the way back, they



"There lay four ships of the line"

saw in the Bay a sight which told them all that they had missed. There lay four ships of the line, French and Spanish, so battered that it seemed wonderful they should ever have been brought there still floating. Two of them were the *Bahama* and the French *Swiftsure*, both of which had been attacked in turn by the *Bellerophon* and *Colossus*, two of our hardest fighters, and the *Swiftsure* had also

## 18 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

had a final broadside from the *Orion*. Another was the *San Juan Nepomuceno*, who had stood up to the *Belleisle*, and afterwards to the *Mars*, and at last had to strike her flag to the *Dreadnought*. The most damaged of all was the *San Ildefonso*; her enemies had been first the *Polyphemus*, then the *Defiance*, and lastly the *Thunderer*; they had cut her masts and rigging to pieces, killed and wounded one third of her crew, and battered holes in her sides that a coach-and-four could have driven through. It was a thrilling sight; but it was almost forgotten a moment afterwards, when the harbour boats came alongside the frigate, and told them, in one breath, of the great battle, the destruction of the French and Spanish fleets, and the death of Lord Nelson. They brought a bundle of newspapers too, with fuller accounts and details, some accurate and some inaccurate, but all given with a good deal of excited language—words like “glorious” and “dastardly.” Charles got one to himself after a time, and read every word of it. When he came to the scene in the cockpit, where Nelson lay dying in the lantern-light, a good deal of salt spray fell on the paper, and he had to sit down behind a gun. He need not have been so very much ashamed of his feelings, he was not the first nor the last by many thousands to choke over that story—every ship under the White Ensign had wet decks when it was talked of.

This is the letter Charles wrote home that same afternoon; of course he was wrongly informed about the French not having fought well.

## THE "LITTLE AMIABLE" 19

December 7, 1805.

DEAR FATHER,—I hope you have heard the joyful news of the British Fleet and the combined Fleets. What joy for those that have been in the action, and still live to give tidings of the glorious action. But alas how dearly purchased, Lord Nelson, Poor Lord Nelson is no more. A Brave Commander and Generous heart like every true Briton but alas he is gone to a better World. But Britons still be joyful cease to weep do not give way to unmanly pleasures, I do not mean to say Care not for his Death, but regret it in a manly manner our King and Country calls us away from those pleasures. But I hope that he has left behind him an Impression on the heart of every Briton to follow his glorious Actions. Your Son Your dearest Son has Things to regret more than any person ever had on shore, that is, that You cannot see Your Son come home honoured with Old England's Scars. For we had left the Fleet for Malta on the 15th of October and the Action began on the 21st. We have not had the good luck to take any prize money Yet, I hope we shall soon get some. I cannot help thinking on the generous hearted Spaniards who when their (Ships) struck and ran ashore with our men in them They would not own them as Prisoners of War but delivered them up to the English again. But the French after being treated with all the generosity and kindness they could, they treated our poor wrecked Seamen with all the contempt and infamy. There is an instance of their cruelty when one of their ships was taken by the *Donegal* She sent a hundred Men and a Lieutenant on Board. The English being fatigued with Fighting



## 20 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

and working the Ship through the Gale, that the French carried her and run her ashore in Cadiz Bay and the English was taken out of her by the Boats of a French Frigate lying in the Bay and treated in a most cruel manner. The poor Spaniards were led into it By their Faithful Friends and Allies the French against their will. The Spaniards fought the Bravest the dastardly Frenchmen were seen running away about two hours and one half after the action began. They were four sail under Admiral Dumanoir, Dastardly Admiral Dumanoir, I am sure his conscience must prick him to the greatest degree; after the poor Spaniards had struck, he fired into them for striking.

Dastardly Frenchmen my Heart aches within me when I see the Spanish Ships how they are battered. The *San Ildefonso* the Captain of her, shot twenty-five of his own men for deserting their Quarters and in the act of encouraging the men both his Legs were shot off. It is reported the Spaniards were exchanged for Bullocks, I cannot ascertain the truth of it.

Goodby God bless You all I am now in Gibraltar Bay I shall be able to give You news when I get into the Fleet. Goodby God bless You all again, Give my Love to my Mother, my Brothers and Sisters. We arrived in Gibraltar this morning. Dear Father, I remain, your affectionate Son, CHARLES.

You see the mids. of the *Little Amiable* were still hoping to get into the fleet, and see some service under Lord Collingwood. But there they were again disappointed; the frigate was ordered home almost immediately with another convoy. It was rather a

gloomy voyage for Charles. It was true that his country was saved, and the great victory had been won by his own Admiral and his own fleet; but he himself had not been there, he had got none of the fighting, or the glory, or the promotion. When the frigate dropped her anchor off St. Helen's he felt that he had brought back nothing from his first adventure. But I think he was wrong.

## II

## THE BRIGHT "MEDUSA"

## 1. THE YOUNG PRIZEMASTER

*L'Aimable* was paid off on the 23rd of February 1806, and on the 24th Captain Bouverie commissioned the *Medusa*, another 32 gun frigate, taking Charles and the best part of the ship's company with him. They were exchanging a good ship for a better. The *Medusa* had always been a first-rate sailer, and nine years before she had been specially fitted up to receive the Marquis Wellesley and his suite. He was going out to be Governor-General of India, and the *Medusa* made the whole voyage, and every part of it, in the fastest time on record. Since then she had done some pretty fighting, and everyone was proud of her. She was often called the *Bright Medusa*, from her bright gold figure-head—Captain Bouverie had it gilded at his own expense, for the Admiralty had no money for such extravagances—but that was too plain a name for the young heroes in the cockpit; they preferred to call her "the *Flashy Medusa*."

Charles had been hoping for leave to go home, if only for a few days; but the captain assured him there was no chance of that—sailing orders might come at any moment. Charles was very unhappy at this, and when his mother sent him a hamper to

## THE BRIGHT "MEDUSA" 23

console him, he felt homesick almost to bubbling over, as you will see from his next letter.

H.M. SHIP "MEDUSA," ST. HELEN'S,  
March 17, 1806.

DEAR MOTHER,—I received your letter a day or two ago which gave me much pleasure You say I did not tell whether I liked the Box. Yes I did very much and I do not know how to repay the tenderness and kindness the Care both you and my Father have taken of me since a baby. Blessed are they that are blessed with such Parents as me, You tell me that my letters are an honour to me; I should be sorry if that was all the honour that I am to possess. I shall never be happy until I have done something good and handsome for My Parents and My Dear Brothers and Sisters. I received a letter from my Father to-day which pleased me much he talked to me about the Grey Poney worshipping me if Sailors fall it is their own faults when the Ship Rolls She knocks you about as much as a Horse. I would give the Poney leave to heave me over either the Starboard or Larboard side Sailors can hold on, and if they do not they are fools. You know what Dogs we are when on Board or on Shore we can Ride Jackasses at Malta, and why not Horses in England? My only wish is to get hold off Monsieur Beaudieu, the Jolly tars of *Medusa* have done it once and will do it again. The *Toperer* should haul down her Try-coloured Ensign and hoist the Pale white English Ensign over it. With a Good Captain to encourage them, what will a British Tar do he will Beat through thick and thin, Rough and smooth and fight to the last drop in them they are

## 24 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

both tough and hardy with constitutions like horses. It is true that they earn their money like horses and spend it like asses. Give my Love to My Father My Brothers and Sisters and all my Good friends, I have not time to say more at present or I would fill up my paper But I am in a hurry to send it away. Adieu God bless and protect you all at home is the constant wish of your ever affectionate Son, CHARLES.

Immediately after this the *Medusa* was ordered out to the Cape, to reinforce the squadron already there under Commodore Sir Home Popham. And now I must tell you a short piece of history which is hardly ever referred to in books, so that you are not very likely to know about it. One day in April of that year, private information came to Sir Home Popham from South America that the inhabitants of Monte Video and Buenos Ayres, which then belonged to Spain, were "so ridden by their Government" that they would offer no resistance to a British army. Sir Home at once consulted Sir David Baird, the general in command of the troops at the Cape, and between them those two officers planned a little expedition on their own account, for, of course, it would have been of no use to waste six months in asking for permission from home. The very next day they sailed from Table Bay for South America—a small fleet of two sixty-fours, a fifty-gun ship, a frigate and a gun-brig, with five transports, carrying a miniature army consisting of the 71st regiment, some artillery, and a few dragoons, under General Beresford. They touched at St. Helena, and picked up a few more men there, bringing the total up to

about 1200. While they were at sea the *Medusa* passed them without knowing it, and went on to the Cape. There she heard what they were doing, and instantly went off to overtake them, in company with some other ships which had arrived at the same time. But before she could reach the Rio de la Plata, Buenos Ayres had been taken and lost again. The town had surrendered at once to the little British army, which was made up to a respectable size by the addition of a landing party of nearly 500 men from the ships. Over a million dollars in money, and some gold in bars, were found in the treasury; all this was sent off to England in the *Narcissus*, and the expedition seemed to be a great success. The army accordingly thanked the navy very much for their assistance, and sent them all back to their ships. They very soon repented of that. When they had been about a month in Buenos Ayres, a French officer in the Spanish service made up his mind to turn them out, and he succeeded. His name was Colonel Liniers, and he was a really fine soldier. He raised a thousand men in Monte Video and Sacramento, on the opposite side of the river, sent word to the Spaniards in Buenos Ayres that he was coming, got all his troops across the Rio in a fog, when the English frigates could not see them, and smuggled them into the town in twos and threes. Then came the fighting, ten thousand Spanish volunteers against twelve hundred English regulars with artillery. The English lost 58 killed and 107 wounded; the Spaniards lost 700, but after three days' fighting they completely surrounded the invaders, and General Beresford had to surrender. This was the

## 26 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

disastrous news which Charles heard when the *Medusa* arrived early in October; but it was a great consolation to hear also that Sir Home was going to begin the campaign over again by taking Monte Video.

H.M. SHIP "MEDUSA," RIO DE LA PLATA,  
October 8, 1806.

DEAR FATHER,—It is with pleasure that I write You these to inform you that I am well and hope You are all the same at Oakingham. I suppose you have not heard that the *Medusa* is in Rio de la Plata off Monte Video all ready to attack the Place. I suppose you have heard of the arrival of H.M. Ship *Narcissus* laden with Golden Bars and Money from Buenas Ayres but I am sorry to say that it is retaken from us again and all our poor fellow Creatures are living in misery. The Spaniards after making a Treaty with General Beresford our Governor that our Troops should be embarked with six months provisions for to return to England if they would give up the Place, the braveness of our Fellow Countrymen exceeds everything, 1500 against 20,000, and fight untill they could not ram home their guns, the Enemy were so near and so numerous.

The 71st behaved themselves so gallantly that I think they deserve double the Prize money that come to their share to encourage them if the General had let them fire at the Enemy they might have defended themselves longer and perhaps held Buenas Ayres, they were firing with Field Pieces which did very little execution, the Colonel of the 71st rode up to ask the General if he would allow them to fire three

rounds at the Enemy, the General said no then says the Colonel, let us have only two no said the General then let us have only one no says General Beresford there is too much Blood shed already. Now in that case I think there could not be enough for after we had taken the Place we gave them all the indulgence possible. We did not take a farthing of their private Property nor touch their Churches which were chock full of Golden Images the English have too much honesty to retain a Place, unless they put all their Prisoners under arrest immediately they surrender.

The Spaniards had Arms and Ammunition stowed away in their Houses they were seen coming into the Town in Blankets and stowing themselves away in the Churches. The Bishop came in to speak to General Beresford to attract his attention while the Spaniards surrounded the Town in all quarters, they fired at our men from the tops of the Houses and out of the Windows We lost 107 men killed wounded and missing and they lost 700. Our Prisoners are dispersed all over the Continent it is reported that they cut the Englishmen's fingers off after they were dead and stuck them in their hats, I do not know how true it may be, the dastardly wretches could I but revenge my fellow countrymen's and shipmates' (for there was Sailors and Marines from all the Ships) cause I would give up my own Life but alas poor wretches, how they must suffer and bear it with patience till the Almighty think fit to deliver them out of the hands of those dastardly wretches who are unworthy of the name of Spaniards who showed their noble and undaunted Spirits at the ever memorial Battle of Trafalgar. We have now 3 sixty fours, 1 fifty, 2



## 28 . THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

dashing Frigates, 1 Storeship, 3 Gun-Brigs, besides Transports. The following are the names of the men of war *Diadem*, Sir Home Popham, *Raisonable* and *Lancaster*, (*Diomedes*) *Medusa* and *Leda*, *Howe* (*Encounter*, *Protector* and *Rollo*). She sailed with us from England. Neither the *Medusa*, *Lancaster* 64 *Howe*, Storeship *Rollo* and *Protector* Gun Brigs were at the taking of Buenas Ayres. We all sailed from the Cape of Good (Hope) with a reinforcement of troops for Sir Home, the *Medusa* the Commodore. We have 2500 men to take Monte Video and they have 15,000. There is 80 men to leave all the Ships, your Son has now a prospect before his eyes which gives him the greatest pleasure Imaginable. Give my Love to Mother Brothers and Sisters and all in the House Mr. and Mrs. Webb and Wheeler, and Mr. and Mrs. Holton and all my good and young Friends, and will you be so good as to tell my Mother or yourself to write in my Name for a Hollyday for School-fellows in remembrance of me not Half but a whole one how does Seug and Ponto come on, I suppose the young unknown Brother or Sister is born by this time, therefore if I should go to a watery grave in defence of my King and my Country it will supply my place but for that I do not give an Idle Thought so therefore do not fret, a Sailor never dies. God bless You and protect You all from everlasting danger and troubles. Dear Father, I still and ever shall Remain, Your affectionate Son,

CHARLES.

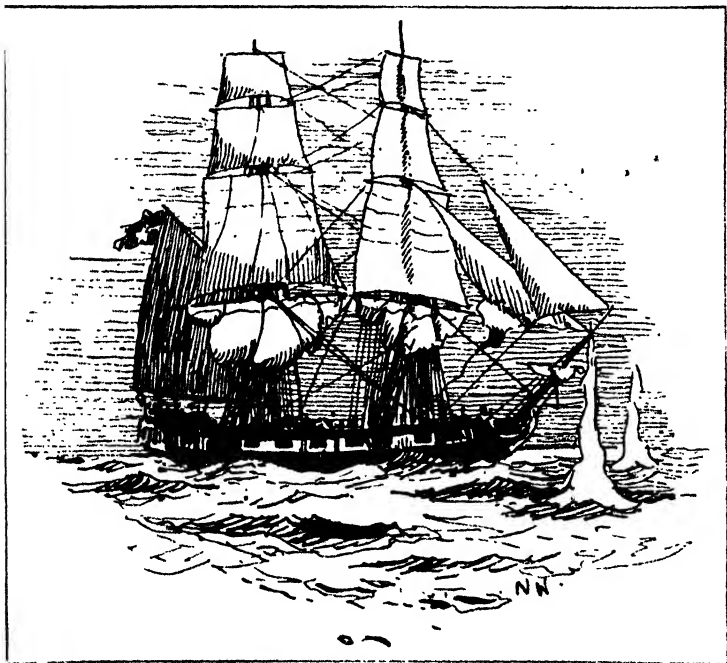
Sir Home's first idea was to bombard Monte Video; the squadron cleared for action and advanced in two lines, sounding very carefully all the way, for

the water is very shallow opposite the town. When they had anchored as near as they dared, they found that only the two frigates, which of course drew less water, were within gunshot of the walls, and even they could only reach them with their long eighteens; their upper-deck guns were 32-pounders, but being carronades—short guns for smashing an enemy's ship at short range—they were no use at this distance. We fire now at seven miles, but in those days about half a mile was the furthest effective range for a long gun. So the frigates did very little damage, and to Charles's extreme disappointment the Commodore soon withdrew them, and decided on a regular siege by land. He began by making a base at Maldonado, where there was a harbour formed by an island called Gorette, and a fort on the island with twenty good guns. On the 29th of October the *Medusa* and *Leda*, with a landing party of troops, took this place after a very feeble resistance, and the expedition settled in there while the frigates went off to capture the enemy's shipping up and down the Rio.

This was easy work, for no merchantman could outsail the *Medusa*, and there was no fighting, for the Spaniards had got their only corvette and all their gunboats safely into the harbour and kept them there. But the first time Charles saw a real live prize bring to in obedience to the *Medusa's* gunshot—ah! that was a golden moment, when his dreams of prize-money were coming true at last. A few minutes later he found that there was something he coveted even more than prize-money. A crew of ten men was put on board the captured ship to take her into Maldonado, and with them went as

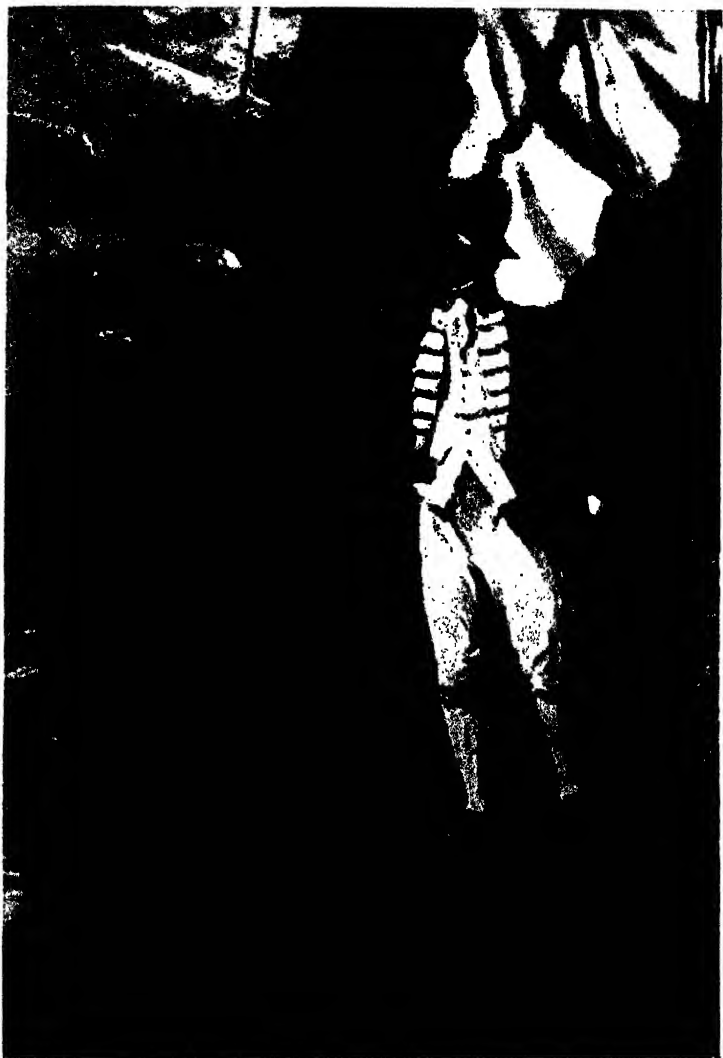
## 30 . THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

commander, or "prizemaster," as he was called, a midshipman—one of the oldsters, of course, but still "just a man of my own rank," thought Charles to himself. For I must tell you that he had now been a full midshipman for some little time. The captain,



"Charles saw a real live prize bring to"

after receiving a report from the master, or navigating officer, that Charles knew about as much of masts and sails and soundings and altitudes as any young gentleman on board, had promoted him on the 1st of May, though he had then been only nine months on the books and only seven at sea.



"THERE'S YOUR SHIRT, MR. AND GOOD-BYE WITH THEM."



That was just six months ago; so now you see him, a midddy of half a year's seniority, a man of just thirteen, looking on with envious admiration as his friend goes down the ship's side with a mighty serious and self-possessed manner that no one had ever seen before. Charles little thought that his own turn would be coming only a month later. But so it happened. The *Medusa* had snapped up three merchantmen in succession, like a trout snapping flies one after another at the same corner, and the two first had been given to the two senior midshipmen, the only two who were really "oldsters." No one quite knew what would be done about the third prize, when she was taken. But the captain made no bones about it; he called to Charles by his name, and just said, "There's your ship, sir, and good luck with her." Charles answered without knowing what he said; the blood sang so loud in his ears that he could not hear his own voice. But he pulled his wits together, and took his little crew on board the brig with the same grave and business-like air he had admired in the others. The truth is that though he already looked forward to bragging gloriously in his next letter home, just at present he was feeling rather anxious, for there was dirty weather blowing up, and when you are doing a thing for the first time you are not generally quite sure of yourself, even at thirteen. But he had all the good luck the captain wished him. He was hardly out of sight of the frigate when the storm began—the Great Gale, as it was afterwards called in those parts, a gale which laid low miles of forest and wrecked hundreds of ships, and was remembered for half a century. I cannot tell you what happened to

## 32. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

the brig in those days of hurricane, but it is certain that after being given up for lost Charles brought her safely into Maldonado. When the *Medusa*, too, returned he became a middy once more, but I doubt if he was ever again quite a youngster, in his own opinion.

HIS MAJESTY'S SHIP "MEDUSA," RIO DE LA PLATA,  
December 18th, 1806.

DEAR FATHER,—I am sorry to inform you that Sir Home Popham is superceeded by Admiral Charles Stirling who is a man that does not at all suit my taste but we must put up with these things. I am happy to inform you that I have been prize master in this River and I assure you I had very hard gales of wind while on board of the Brig so much so that the officers on board the *Medusa* hardly ever expected to see me alive again thinking that she would sink, and we have had two Skirmishes with the Spaniards. We have had a great deal of Blowing Weather whilst in this River but Jack puts up with all the hardships of life Blow high or Blow low we are always cheerful and merry and ready to Chastise the Enemies of our Country, should our injured Country Bleed we will still defend it in the *Flashy Medusa*, while her ribs stick together, we do not mind a few Iron Dump-lings—called Doe Boys by us and more commonly Duff for Breakfast.

Adieu My Dearest Father and Mother Brothers and Sisters and all at home I hope soon to have the pleasure to meet you all with hand and heart like a true honest Tar. I am sorry I cannot say more for we are going to Sea and the Captain has sent

for the letters, he desires to be kindly remembered to you and all at home. Remember me kindly to Lord Radnor and all the Family. Adieu once more God Bless and Protect You all is the constant wishes and (prayer) of Your affectionate Son, CHARLES.

Excuse the writing being in a Hurry.

## 2. THE SIEGE OF MONTE VIDEO

A day or two before this letter was written, Captain Hardyman, in the *Unicorn* frigate, had arrived from England with orders to Sir Home Popham to hand over his command to Admiral Stirling, and come home to be tried by court-martial. The charge on which he was to be tried was that of leaving his post at the Cape without orders; and of course he was guilty, there was no denying that, but when there is no time to wait for orders a really strong man will often feel it best to act without them. If he is successful in his undertaking he is sure to be forgiven; if he fails, then he must pay the penalty, but he will in that case have sacrificed his own career in the hope of doing his country a service, and that is worth as much as most of the honours that a man can get. Sir Home Popham was a very clever officer; it was he who invented the system of signalling by which the *Agamemnon* and *L'Aimable* were able to communicate while the French were chasing them, and by which Lord Nelson told his fleet at Trafalgar that "England expects that every man will do his duty." The flag-signalling in our Navy has ever since been based upon Popham's code. But this did



## 84 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

not help him now that he had brought 1200 British soldiers into trouble, and when he got home he was severely reprimanded.

Admiral Stirling was a good seaman, too, and a very energetic commander; Charles was quite wrongly informed when he wrote this letter, and soon changed his opinion of him. The Admiral arrived at Maldonado in the *Ardent*, 64, but he shifted his flag into the *Diadem*, and sent Sir Home Popham home in the *Diomede*, 50-gun ship, so that the squadron was decidedly stronger than before—it now consisted of four 64's, and three frigates, besides smaller vessels. The *Ardent* also brought out Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Auchmuty to take command of the troops. Sir Home left on January 6th, and within a week the new campaign had begun. Monte Video was to be regularly invested; it was a strong town, standing well above the shore, on heights defended by walls, and forts with 160 guns in position. The garrison was probably rather miscellaneous, but certainly outnumbered the besiegers by at least four to one, and was well supplied with provisions and ammunition. The place was, in short, a hard nut, but Stirling and Auchmuty determined to crack it, and they just succeeded, as you will see.

On the 13th of January they evacuated Maldonado, and sailed to the island of Flores, near which they found a small bay suitable for landing, about eight miles east of Monte Video. The Spaniards were drawn up on the hills ready to oppose the disembarkation, but by good management the frigates got close enough in-shore to be able to command the

beach, and the troops all got safely to land. Three days afterwards 800 seamen and marines were also landed, and the whole force moved forward to within two miles of the town, fighting a very smart action with 6000 of the enemy, whom they defeated with a loss of 1500 in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The ships supported them, and finally dropped anchor off Chico Bay; but they found, as before, that the water was too shallow to let them come in close enough to bombard. There the troops were, however, and Admiral Stirling was not the man, in a combined operation, to leave the other service in the lurch. He at once disembarked guns, men, and ammunition from the ships, and made regular batteries to breach the walls and silence the enemy's forts. As you may imagine, it was pretty hard work landing guns weighing nearly three tons apiece, and dragging them on their very small wheels over the sandy road to the front - it was, in fact, a bit of work that only sailors could have done, and they were so hard put to it that at times even the flagship had only thirty men left on board.

Making the batteries, too, was no easy matter, especially as the Spaniards kept putting shots into them, and sending out their best marksmen to snipe the working parties. But in a week all was ready, and the battering began. The *Medusa* and *Unicorn* also opened fire, so that whether Charles stayed on board or went on shore-duty he got enough, and more than enough, of the music of his beloved guns. But he had the great satisfaction of feeling that he was really useful, for as the ships' captains could not risk losing their senior officers ashore, the batteries

## 86 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

were worked by the juniors, and the only four naval officers wounded during the siege were a sub-lieutenant of marines and three midshipmen. The lower decks lost ten killed and six wounded. This battering and skirmishing went on for nine days, and though the men were in splendid spirits, Charles gradually became aware that the senior officers were growing decidedly anxious. He thought at first that they were dissatisfied with the progress made in breaching the wall, and so they were, but that was only one side of the trouble. It was not till the 1st of February, when some of the batteries had been advanced to within 600 yards, that he found out the whole truth. That day it was his turn to take ammunition ashore, and as there seemed to be only half the usual quantity coming up, he went down to see the gunner about it. He found him not in the cartridge magazine, but in the forward compartment where the raw powder was kept. "I suppose you've run out of cartridge," said Charles; "how long will you be making them up?"

The gunner looked very serious. "I can't say, sir," he replied; "perhaps you can judge for yourself."

He was staring at the floor. Charles stepped inside and looked in the same direction. There was not one barrel left.

"We must borrow," he said at last.

The gunner looked gloomier still. "There's no one to borrow from; the frigates have got just one day's rations for the broadsides; the sixty-fours are cleaned out. After to-morrow we shan't have a kick left in us."

Charles ran up to the captain's cabin, and told him

what he had heard. The captain was always cool and cheerful. "All right," he said; "the powder's not lost; it is in the town yonder."

Charles did not understand for the moment. "Yes," said the captain, "when we've put it all through that hole in the wall, we shall go in and fetch it out again." Then he gave a nod, and added, "To-morrow night, I should say, but don't talk about it."

Then Charles did understand, and the cannonade that day had quite a different sound to him, for he knew that every shot brought the moment of the assault rapidly nearer. Next morning the ships' guns were silent, but the batteries went steadily on, and the engineers reported that the breach was practicable. In the evening a summons to surrender was sent in to the Governor of Monte Video, to which he returned no answer. The troops would have been very much disappointed if he had surrendered, for they were already told off for the attack, and the last thing they wanted was a walk-over.

Soon after midnight the preparations were complete, and the army moved forward to within hurrahing distance of the breach. They lay there in silence till the sky began to lighten towards dawn, and then went in with an irresistible rush, the Navy supporting them in two strong brigades. The loss at the breach itself was less than had been expected—either there were no mines or they failed to explode—but there was some stiff fighting before the town and citadel were carried. The total British loss ran up to 200 killed and over 400 wounded, but the nut was cracked, and inside it they found their powder, or

## 38. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

its equivalent, and the ships were alive once more.

Prizes fell in, too—the harbour contained one good corvette of 28 guns (but she was set on fire by her crew), two or three older ones, and some armed schooners, also 21 gunboats and a lot of merchant vessels. There would be quite a good pocketful of prize-money for the Navy, and they deserved it, for they had done a hard bit of work cheerfully and well. The Army had done well, too, and I am very sorry to have to tell you how they came to grief afterwards. The Government at home, thinking that after this brilliant siege the campaign was going to be a big success, sent out two new commanders to reap the glory. The squadron was taken over by Admiral George Murray in the *Polyphemus*—one of Nelson's men in a Trafalgar ship—and that was no great harm; and Sir Samuel Auchmuty was superseded by General Crawford, who had greatly distinguished himself in Egypt—and that was no great harm either. But then Crawford was very shortly afterwards made to put his troops and himself under the orders of a Lieutenant-General named Whitelocke, who ruined everything, including his own career. In the following July he made a second attack on Buenos Ayres, and was trapped by Colonel Liniers in much the same way as Beresford had been. He got out of the town with great difficulty, losing 2500 in killed, wounded, and prisoners. Among the prisoners was General Crawford himself, and Whitelocke could only get them back by giving Liniers an undertaking that the whole British force should evacuate the Rio within two months. So the sixty-fours took the army back,

some to the Cape, and some to England. There the unfortunate General Whitelocke was tried and found guilty of the worst kind of incapacity, and was dismissed from the Service, where they remembered him only as "General Whiteliver." The *Medusa* went home to St. Helen's, and then spent two years in cruising off the coast of Spain with Admirals Gambier and Duckworth, who commanded what was almost a Trafalgar fleet; for it included the *Téméraire*, *Revenge*, *Achille*, *Theseus*, *Dreadnought*, and other famous ships such as the *Cesar* and *St. George*. At last, in April 1809, the *Medusa* was ordered to England, and moored in Plymouth Sound. On the 19th of May Charles received his discharge, and was free to go home.

He had an order for prize-money which caused him great satisfaction, but great impatience too. He had set his heart on repaying to his father the whole of his allowance of £100 a year since he first went to sea. When he got home, at last, he had just enough to do this; his father accepted payment in the handsomest manner, and Charles felt very rich and great. Three days later he felt richer and greater still, when he found that the money had all been banked in his own name. And so ended his second adventure.

## III

## THE BOLD "MENELAUS"

## 1. A DANDY FRIGATE

CHARLES was at home more than four months; just the best of the year, from May to October, and he found every hour of it delightful. After nearly four years of life on board the old house seemed to him perfectly beautiful, and almost more than perfectly luxurious. Of course he didn't use those words; he called it "shipshape" and "snug," and it was not only the cool high rooms and quiet garden that he was thinking of, but the cookery and the beds, and even the carpets on the decks.

There were changes, naturally, but they were nearly all to the good. His father was rather grey, and busier than ever; he more often had his grave, intent look, but his brown eyes still lit up and changed him completely when he smiled his broad hovering smile. Charles felt that he had pleased him, and that it was worth doing. His mother he thought as beautiful as ever, and as young and jolly; but when she took him to see a small grave in the churchyard, with the name of Jane, aged four, upon it—well, then he saw that there was a difference. But she was even more keen and sympathetic than before, and very happy to have two new brothers for

him—Henry, a very recent arrival, and John, the "unknown brother" who had been born while the *Medusa* was on her way to Monte Video. The other brothers were growing up. William kept rabbits no longer; he was now nearly eighteen, and was studying surgery. Meanwhile he had joined "the regiment"—Lord Radnor had given him his ensign's commission in January, and was going to make him a lieutenant in June. He had promised to do the same for Frank when he should be seventeen, but that was nearly three years off yet. Then there were the three remaining sisters; they adored Charles, and he liked it. Anne was his "mate," and did everything with him; the two younger ones were his "topmen"—they had to run up and down stairs and fetch and carry for him. When they did it quickly he called them "handy young swabs"; when they were not so quick they were simply "swabs." But he was not too great a man to be kind and protecting too, and he often promised that when he had set them all up in life he would come ashore and stay with them all in turn.

These plans were very wide of what their life was really to be, but happily no one knew that. Charles could not tell that before he came again his mother and Caroline would both be gone; nor that in five years more his darling Anne would be dying too. Even of Molly he saw little after this, for she became a German Countess, and lived too far away to be visited during his short times ashore.

For the present, then, he was full of all kinds of happy expectation. His only trouble was the neces-



## 42. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

sity of continually worrying the Admiralty to employ him. The Navy was being steadily cut down, and officers were turned off in hundreds. For the present, too, it was hardly possible to rely on Charles's own captain, for he was about to be married, and his future was uncertain. But Lord Radnor once more showed himself an indefatigable friend. He sent Charles with a special introduction to Captain Peter Parker of the frigate *Melpomene*, and on Captain Parker's application, Charles was appointed to that ship in September 1809. It was great luck for him, for his new captain was a very distinguished officer, who had risen even faster than Captain Bouverie. In 1803, when he was eighteen, he had been a lieutenant in the *Victory*, and in 1804 Lord Nelson made him a commander, and sent him in the *Weasel* sloop to cruise close in to Cadiz harbour, and watch the French Fleet. It was the *Weasel* who first signalled that Villeneuve was coming out; but she was immediately sent off to recall Admiral Louis from Gibraltar, and got back just too late for Trafalgar. The day after the battle, Parker was made a post-captain, and was soon afterwards cruising in the *Melpomene*; he was still under twenty years of age. You will ask how this could happen; and I must tell you that the reason was partly that he came of a famous naval family; his father, both his grandfathers, and his great-grandfather had all been admirals. More than that—it was his grandfather, Sir Peter Parker, who had been so good a friend to Nelson when he was young, and was afterwards chief mourner at his funeral. But you need not suppose that "interest" (what we now

call "jobbery") was the only cause of Captain Parker's promotion. Nelson helped his friends, no doubt, but only when he was at the same time doing



"He sent Charles with a special introduction"

the best for the Service. He knew his men, and he never did better for the Service than when he promoted this one. By 1809 the *Melpomene* and her captain had already made themselves a name.

## 44. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

All this was splendid for Charles, but in the very moment of his good fortune he had to face a setback. When he came aboard the frigate, on the 29th of September, he found that the captain was ashore, and ill. The ship could not wait for him; a new captain was taking her over, and he was bringing volunteers of his own with him. Charles was in a position which seemed almost impossible; he could not insist on staying in the *Melpomene* with a strange captain who did not want him, he could not offend the Admiralty by going ashore again after begging to be sent to sea, and yet if he did not wait for Captain Parker he would lose the best chance he was ever likely to have.

He could think of only one thing to do, and it was the right one. He hurried off to see Captain Parker, and Captain Parker solved the problem for him immediately. He promised to keep a place for Charles in the next ship he got, and offered to get him some kind of employment in the meantime, which would not take him far away. He warned him that it would not be anything very first-rate, to which Charles replied that he didn't care if it was a watch in a hospital-hulk. That pleased the captain, and two days afterwards Charles found himself transferred to the sloop-of-war *Favorite*, just home from Caraccas, and now in dock to refit for privateer destroying in the Channel.

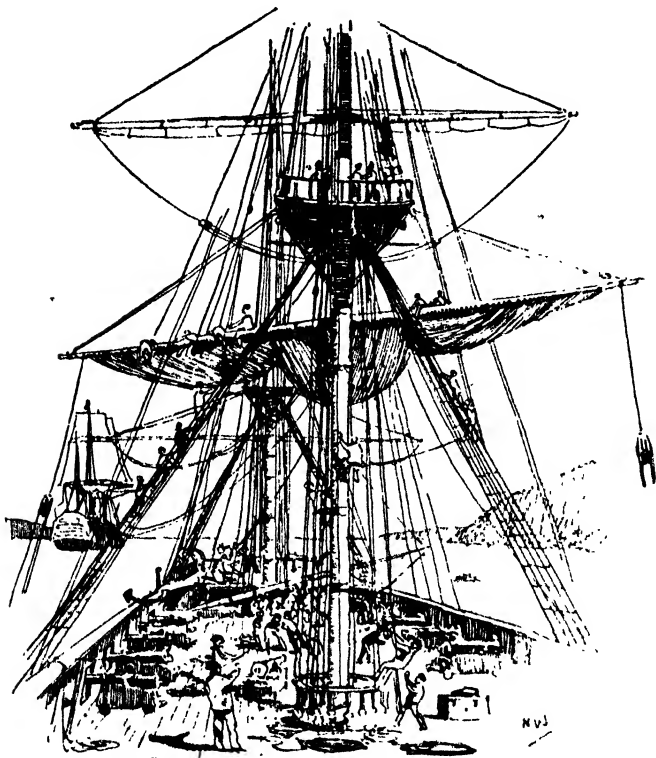
This was coming down in the world, for the mids in a sloop or gunbrig were not treated as equals by the proud young gentlemen in ships of the line or smart frigates; but Charles had a comfortable feeling that he was a sort of prince in disguise, and would

soon be restored to his own rank again. He also found out that the habit of looking down on small ships and their officers was only a bit of snobbery, with no real reason in it; even he, "an old *Medusa*," could find nothing inferior in the way the *Favorite* was sailed and fought. But of course he looked eagerly forward to a return of his good fortune.

It was not long in coming. On the 9th of May, the *Favorite*, after a good chase, took a French privateer, *La Doraule*, near the Lizard, and brought her ten days later into Plymouth Sound. Charles was sent with a boat to take the forty-three prisoners to the *St. Nicholas*, the prison ship, and then to go ashore for letters. One letter bore his own name, in a bold handwriting which he knew. It was from Captain Parker, who told him that he had been appointed to the *Menelaus*, and was to come ashore and join her immediately. What was the *Menelaus*? There was no such ship afloat, and yet Charles felt that he had heard something like the name before. Yes, she was one of the big new 38-gun frigates which were being built to show that British yards could do as well as French ones if they tried. At this moment she was out of dock, and lying at Hamoaze fitting for sea. Charles went aboard late that night, was entered on her books next morning, and immediately made a private inspection of the whole ship. He felt that he had indeed come into his own again, and something better; she surpassed in every detail all that he had imagined. The first thing that struck him was her roominess; she was 180 feet long and 40 wide, from out to out; even when loaded, she had a freeboard of 20 feet to the

## 46. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

fife-rail, and on each of her decks a man, six feet high, could stand upright with his hat on. If you had just been tucked away in a sloop for four



"Lying at Hamoaze fitting for sea"

months, you would realise better what that meant to Charles. You would also share his excitement at finding that the mainmast of the new ship was

92 feet high, the topmast over that 56 feet, and the top-gallant mast 29 more. A 177 feet against the *Medusa's* 150! and above all that were to come her royals, of course—"and sky-scrappers, too, I hope," Charles said to Mr. Cunningham, the master. Mr. Cunningham looked round quickly. "Show me a chase," he said, "and I'll do that and more; I'll have moonsails on her."

Charles smiled at that. "You think she'll sail?" he asked, rather to draw the master. Mr. Cunningham's ~~eyes~~ shone. "Man," he said, pointing to the mainyard above their heads, "do you know the length of you little stick? Eighty-one feet six it is, and one foot seven and a half diameter; you could sleep on it with comfort." Charles laughed outright; he liked Mr. Cunningham. But he left him now, for he wanted to see the guns.

You might suppose that a 38-gun ship would carry 38 guns; but many ships carried more than their rating, and this was especially the case with frigates, for they had to take the chance of single-handed fighting with opponents who might be heavier than themselves. The *Menelaus* and her sister-ships mounted 28 long eighteens on the gun-deck, eighteen 32-pound carronades on their quarter-decks and forecastle, besides two bow chasers—long eighteens—and a 24-pounder shifting gun, which could be used on either side. The total was therefore forty-nine guns, and each broadside could fire twenty-five, including the shifting gun.

Charles thought such a ship as this might almost tackle a 50-gun ship or even a ship of the line; and he was within the mark, for in the next

## 48 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

four years he saw the *Menelaus* face two frigates at once, spoil a 74 and drive an 80-gun ship on the rocks. But before she could hope to do that kind of work she had to make good a very serious defect. When she weighed and made sail from St. Helen's on July the 11th, 1810, she was a fine example of naval pride up to date. "The yards of the ship were painted white instead of black: the men wore white hats, so did the officers: the gaskets for the sails were covered with bleached canvas: the mast-heads were white. . . . All the dingy colours of the *Arethusa* quarter-deck, 'dockyard yellow, made more doubtful from a flash of blue,' were exchanged for green-painted bulwarks, decks as white as snow, officers in their proper uniforms—not hobbling about in short jackets like the mate of a merchantman, but dressed like officers, and walking as such." But she was a fine ship with a villainous crew. Her complement was nearly 300 men and 21 boys; among them there happened to be an unusual proportion of untrained and unruly characters; excellent fighting material, no doubt, but at present quite wild. Fortunately, Captain Parker was what was called by the lower decks "a taut hand." He was not a brute—his first lieutenant said that he was always considering whether persuasion would fit the case better than punishment—but he had found out how to train a rough crew in the *Melpomene*, and he meant this ship's company to be at least as efficient as that one. Incessant work and rigid discipline was his plan. Besides sailing the ship and practising all their ordinary duties, the men were constantly exercised in fighting the great

guns. The *Menelaus* was ordered to St. Helena to bring home the East India convoy, and as she neared the Equator the heat became more and more unbearable. But the slacker the men got, the more gun-drills were put on, and the more sternly any act of disobedience was punished. In the month of August alone there were seven days on which the batteries were worked as if the frigate were in action with both broadsides; on eight other days the whole ship's company were piped on deck to witness punishment, and there were three or four men flogged on each of these occasions. In Funchal Roads, off Madeira, three men attempted to desert by swimming ashore; two were brought back, one got away or was drowned. Ten days after this, when the ship was off St. Paul's, on the Grain Coast, it was discovered that in spite of all precautions nearly 250 lbs. of butter had melted and run into the bottom of the hold. "Luckily," the purser remarked, "there was plenty of cheese." But a few weeks later he reported with a very long face that between five and six hundred pounds of cheese had also become unfit for food. It began to be a question whether anything eatable would be left on board. The men became almost reckless; some of them succeeded in stealing rum. The captain held an inquiry and broke both the sergeants of marines. A week later there were audible grumbings reported. He gave the ship three consecutive days of exercise, one at gun-drill and two in shortening sail. This had a better effect than flogging, and no one was more glad of it than Charles. He hated execution days, and always felt when he saw



## 50 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

a man stripped and tied up at the gangway that even if the fellow was the biggest ruffian on board he was getting what no one could have deserved. Of course he had seen that kind of thing before, but the *Medusa* had had an old and seasoned crew, and it took fewer floggings to preserve order on her lower deck for three years than were now necessary to keep the *Menelaus* taut for three months. It was some consolation to remember that discipline was sure to improve at the mere hint of a possible fight or chase. This was always the experience of officers who had seen active service, and Charles soon found that it held good for the *Menelaus*.

### 2. THE TAKING OF MAURITIUS

On October the 6th St. Helena was sighted, to everyone's great relief. The frigate lay there at her moorings for a week, waiting for her convoy, which did not arrive. Instead of it there came a fast ship with bad news. The French had a naval station at Port Louis in the Isle de France (now called the Mauritius) and kept a squadron of frigates there to attack our East Indiamen. A rather larger squadron of English frigates was always cruising thereabouts to blockade them, and see the merchantmen safe past to the Cape. Now, partly by cleverness and partly by luck, the French had succeeded in cutting off two of our frigates, the *Iphigénie* and the *Néréide*, and had captured them after a very hard fight. The *Néréide* in particular covered herself with glory, and was all but knocked to pieces. But the *Iphigénie* was added

to the French force, and both were deducted from ours, so that the balance was made dangerously equal, and that meant great risks for our trade.

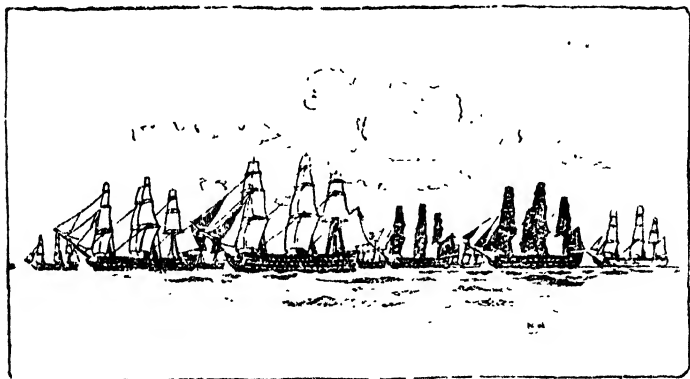
Fortunately the English commodore, Captain Josias Rowley of the *Boadicea*, was a man of great energy and decision. He made up his mind that since the eagles had really become dangerous he must take their nest once for all. The Isle de France was a strongly-held base—there were coral reefs nearly all round it, there were batteries mounting more than two hundred guns, and a garrison of 1300 regular troops and 10,000 militia—a well found and well manned military establishment, supported by the squadron, which included four 40-gun frigates. Altogether it did not seem the kind of place that could be taken by a landing-party of seamen, and no one had ever seriously attacked it, though many afterwards wondered why they had not done so.

The command of the fleet was now taken over by Admiral Bertie, Commander-in-Chief on the South African station. He began by asking for 10,000 troops from the Cape, and every ship that could be spared on the East India trade route. When the summons reached the *Menelaus* the spirits of all on board went up with a bound. The frigate rode that night at a single anchor, weighed early next morning, and made all sail for the Cape. Slackness was at an end, and Captain Parker soon saw that he had his men in hand; exercising the guns became a popular employment, and no one grumbled at anything but the lightness of the wind. It was very light, but the *Menelaus* did her best, and satisfied even Mr. Cunningham. She had taken over twelve weeks' sail-

## 52 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

ing to make the 1600 leagues to St. Helena; she made the 1600 to Mauritius in less than half the time, picking up a few soldiers at the Cape, and running into Admiral Bertie's fleet on November 26th, between the Island of Rodriguez and the Isle Ronde.

When Charles came on deck to take the morning watch on the 27th there were no less than fifty sail in sight. The *Menelaus* was just in time. At 9 A.M. the *Boadicea* made the signal for Captain Parker



"There were no less than fifty sail in sight"

to go on board the Admiral; he came back in less than an hour, and as he set foot on deck another signal ordered the whole fleet to weigh and make sail to the West.

The ships were a fine sight as they formed the order of sailing—there was one 74, the *Illustrious*, eleven frigates, including the *Cornwallis* of 44 guns, five of 38, two 36's, and three 32's; four sloops, a gun-brig, and three smaller vessels. The rest were transports and storeships. By next evening the expedition

was off Port Louis, but Port Louis was impregnable from the sea. The Admiral knew that; he was only making a feint. The mountains which protect the port on the south and east run down on the north into flat jungle, and there is an anchorage and landing-place called Grande Baie, protected by forts on a long jutting point called Cannonier's Point. This had all been secretly reconnoitred, and soundings taken by Commodore Rowley himself a few days before, with Lieutenant Street of the *Staunch*, Lieutenant Blakiston of the Madras Engineers, and the masters of the *Boudicca* and *Africaine*. Their work was well done, at some risk, and it made all the difference between disaster and success. At midday on November 29th the transports were brought to anchor between Grande Baie and Coin de Mire, the northern point of the island. The smaller frigates stood in to the south of them, to engage the forts and cover the shore, the *Cornwallis* and the 38's took station further south to keep the French squadron in port, and take the forts in rear. They opened fire at one o'clock, and the forts replied briskly. At two o'clock the *Menelaus* closed in, and began firing red-hot shot. She pitched them at a low half-sunk building under a group of cocoa-palms behind the forts. Charles watched every shot through a glass, and several of them seemed to find the mark plumb; but nothing happened. At last a column of smoke shot suddenly high into the air, the palm trees fell this way and that, like ferns when you heave a spade under them, and a sharp bluff roar came over the water. Everyone was silent for a moment; Charles felt as if he had been hit in the wind. Then he heard Mr.

## 54 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

Cunningham's voice, some distance away, saying to the mid. who was dotting the log for him, "Mark that, man—At 2.40 obsairved enemy's magazine blow up."

The forts, however, had a lot of ammunition left, and until they were silenced nothing could be done. They were still firing when night fell, but next morning at daybreak they no longer replied to the frigates. The boats were manned, and one of them went in with a flag of truce—you can imagine how every glass followed her. The flag disappeared into the nearest fort, and immediately appeared waving frantically from the top of it. In an instant all the other boats were off, racing for the landing-place. Mr. Cunningham duly observed them take possession of the forts, and during the day the army, with all its artillery stores and ammunition, the marines of the squadron, and a large body of seamen under Captain Montagu, were all successfully disembarked.

They were still twelve miles from Port Louis, and General Decaen, the French Commander, had placed troops and artillery in a strong position to oppose their advance. The battle began next morning, and was not over by nightfall. The excitement on board the ships was intense, for nothing could be seen of the action, and the firing was very heavy, with ominous pauses. After dark an order came for the *Menelaus* to stand off shore to the south as soon as it should be light, and engage the forts in the direction of Port Louis. Charles had turned in by this time, and was waked by another mid. to discuss the news. They agreed that it showed the army to be gaining ground.

The firing began again at daybreak, but Charles paid no more attention to it, for the *Menelaus*, with the *Illustrious*, *Cornwallis*, *Boadicea*, *Nisus*, and *Clorinde* was standing in to begin the bombardment of the sea-front. The enemy had some mortars in position, and some of the big shells did a certain amount of damage, but the *Menelaus* lost only a few splinters. Still it was a new experience for Charles, and quite different from the breakfast of "dough boys" he had had on other occasions.

At ten o'clock a flag of truce appeared, to everyone's surprise, for the forts were not silenced, and did not seem to be much injured. But the fact was that the British army had driven in the garrison, and captured all their artillery. General Deenen was a brave man, but his position was desperate. He was on an island three thousand leagues from home, where no kind of reinforcements could reach him; the squadron was helpless in harbour, and he had seen enough of the English troops in these two days to realise that his own force, though still about equal in numbers, could not hope to face them a second time. He had no ground to stand on for negotiating, and next day, being the 3rd of December 1810, he signed articles surrendering the island to Great Britain, in whose keeping it has ever since remained.

Before conveying the expedition back to the Cape the squadron had one joyful duty to perform—the overhauling of the port, their own particular prize. Charles and all the other mids. got leave to go in with the boats, and they spent a whole afternoon in simply gloating. It was not only the prize-money they were so keen about, though that looked

## 56. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

like being what they called "a fat sheep." It was the feeling that the Navy was getting back its own, and something more. The glorious old *Néréide*—they rushed to see her first. She was battered to a wreck, and would never sail again, but she was English, she would die English. The *Iphigénie* only needed some new sticks and a blue ensign at her mizzen to be herself again. Also, there were the *Charlton*, the *Ceylon*, and the *United Kingdom*—English East Indiamen lately captured. Then came the French frigates; some were old and damaged, but the *Bellone* and the *Astrée*, both of 40 guns, were taken for the British Navy, and rechristened the *Junon* and *Pomone*. Those had been their old names, and every British sailor knows that a ship is sure to be unlucky if she sails under a name that is not her own from the slips. Last of all, there were twenty-four French merchant vessels; it was a nice little potful of money for the Admiral and his fleet.

The *Menelaus* was sent home immediately with despatches. She brought also the captured French colours, and when she cast anchor off St. Helen's on the 16th of February there was an outburst of enthusiasm there and at Spithead. It did not soon die away, for in the sacks full of letters which she brought from the fleet there were many remarks upon her wonderful sailing and manœuvring, and "the incomparable discipline and order" into which Captain Parker had brought her crew. The result was that during the four weeks that she lay at Spithead dozens of officers came aboard to inspect her and to "gather wrinkles," or, as you would now say, "pick up tips" for their own use. No doubt Mr. Cunning-

ham told them all about her masts and rigging and her six tiers of sail; the captain probably mentioned the gun-drill and the cat. But he also paid a compliment to the midshipmen, to whom he was always particularly kind. He said to one visitor that his practice was to visit the decks every day, with one or other of the lieutenants. "But that's not all," he added; "I take two of the young gentlemen with me; they run in everywhere like ferrets, and point out everything that I should not see." That was quite true, I expect; the captain of a ship was a very great man, and he and his lower-deck hands generally knew very little of each other; he was often called simply "Number Nought," or "The Figure-head," just as now it is said that many men in a battleship only know the captain as "the Boss," or "the Bloke." Probably the mids. of the *Menelaus* introduced a good many heroes to their captain, for they at any rate knew every man on board, and his character too.

### 3. POLISHING CAPE SICIE

The frigate made a very quick refit, and no leave was given, for she was ordered out to St. Helena again to bring home the East India convoy. It was a very rich fleet this time, and when it arrived on August the 7th, without loss, the company's directors showed their gratitude by voting a handsome present of plate and money to the officers of the *Menelaus*. But that gave no pleasure to Charles, for the first letter he received on landing was one from his father telling him of his mother's death three weeks before.



## 58. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

She had left a child of a month old—a delicate boy named George. No one expected him to survive, but he lived to be seventy-eight, and served his country in the Sikh wars and in the Indian Mutiny.

Charles got a week's leave. I cannot tell you what that home-coming felt like to him, for he never wrote a word about it. I daresay he was almost glad to be back again in the noise and bustle of the ship. Of course at night, and especially when he took the middle watch, there would be times when thoughts would come; but to some people, when they are alone between the sea and the stars, those who have died seem no further away than those who are still alive. I hope it was so with Charles.

The *Menelaus* weighed again on October the 14th. Lord William Bentinck, the new Ambassador to the Court of Naples, had to be taken out, with his suite, and Captain Parker was chosen for this service. With Lord William came a young friend of his, about Charles's age, named Frederick Chamier, who had been just appointed to the *Menelaus*, and who has left us a lively description of the ship's company as he found them. "Captain Parker was then about twenty-three years of age—tall, handsome and well proportioned, one of the finest-looking men I ever remember to have seen—brave as he was handsome, and like the brave, always generous. He received me kindly when I was introduced to him by his lordship: and I dived down to the larboard berth and joined as gallant a crew of youngsters as ever belonged to any ship in his Majesty's Service. If on deck, we were obliged to be scrupulously correct; for Peter used to

say, if ever he had occasion to find fault with a sailor for being deficient in respect to a midshipman: 'By the god of war (his favourite oath), I will make you touch your hat to a midshipman's coat, if it's hung on a broomstick to dry.' . . . We sailed a few days afterwards: the ship a very paragon of good discipline; for her former first-lieutenant, now Captain Plumridge (a man well known and properly appreciated in the Navy), had left her in as high order as ever Mainwaring, his successor, could have wished. She was reduced to a mere piece of mechanism: the watch was made, and we had only to wind it up. She really did 'Walk the waters like a thing of life.' Any man might justly have been proud of such a command: and any Englishman might have felt a glowing satisfaction that, generally speaking, 'of such was the British Navy.'

"Our crew were good and mostly able seamen; and when they were mustered at divisions in their clean white frocks and trowsers, toeing a line along the deck, they looked what they were—a hardy, well-disciplined, clean, and gallant crew. The different evolutions were performed almost in silence, and with wonderful celerity: no Harlequin at Covent Garden could make a greater change more apparently instantaneously than Peter could make, and shorten sail. We felt that conscious security, arising from well-placed confidence, so very desirable on board a ship—we felt we had little to fear from an adversary of our own size, and that we could baffle a superior force, or the elements, by the promptitude and skill with which the ship was manœuvred or conducted. Captain Parker's method ought to be

## 60. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

held up for universal imitation: the whole style of his ship was what a British man-of-war should be; his table was elegant, and the dignity of the inferior officers was upheld by the constant invitations of the Captain."

This was an uneventful voyage, but it brought back very vividly to Charles the recollection of his first time at sea, in the days before Trafalgar, and immediately after it. On the 17th of November he found himself once more in Gibraltar Bay; and on the 7th of December he had the honour of being presented to Admiral Sir Thomas Fremantle, who came on board from Palermo, to take the Ambassador ashore. Charles thought a good deal of this meeting, for the Admiral had a great name in the Navy. It was he who commanded the *Neptune* at Trafalgar, when she followed the *Téméraire* and *Victory* so closely, and took the huge *Santísima Trinidad*, with ninety-eight guns against the Spaniard's hundred and thirty.

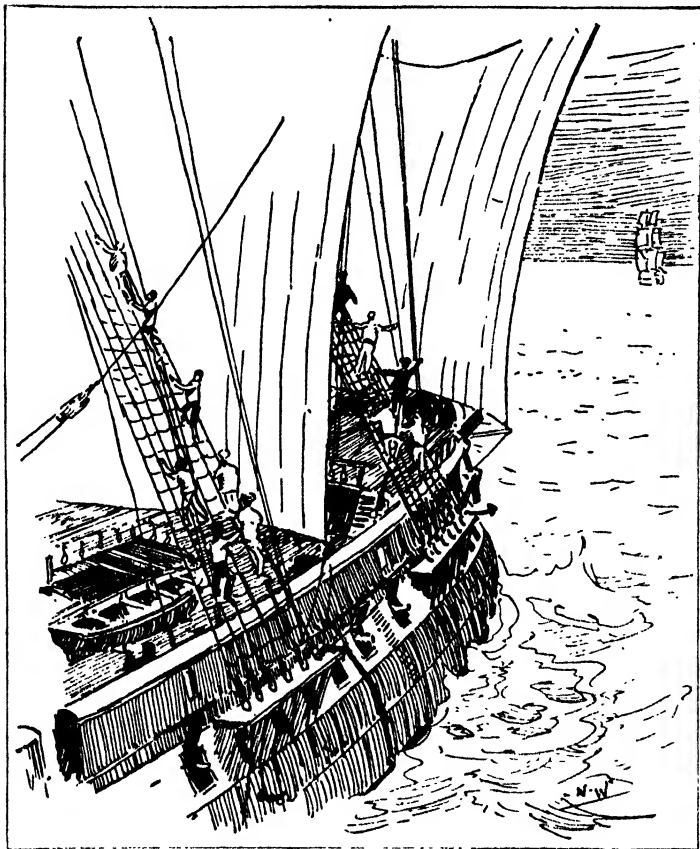
The *Menelaus* went on to Malta with a convoy, and was then ordered to join the Mediterranean Fleet, under the command of Sir Edward Pellew. This was just what the whole ship's company were longing for; they were tired of sheep-driving, even if the sheep were fat—they wanted to hunt the enemy's flocks, and their dogs too. They knew their captain would go at anything, and they asked for nothing better than to go with him.

Their first hunt ended in a bitter disappointment. The *Menelaus* was beating up north-west between Cape Bon and the island of Maretimo when she sighted an enemy's frigate, apparently larger than

herself, and some miles ahead on the same course. A single fight against odds was the one thing Captain Parker desired most in the world; he cleared for action, and gave chase at once, flying five colours and firing guns to make his challenge clear. The chase took no notice of him, but held on her way. The *Menelaus* did her best, and seemed by the end of the day to have gained a little, but in the night the enemy changed course, and as the following morning was misty the *Menelaus* overshot and was almost thrown out. She gained once more, and once more lost her advantage in the same way. Her whole company became first angry, then grave, then grim. For the five days and nights the chase lasted look-out and watch-keeping became mere names: not a man left his place, not a man could be persuaded to turn in. When it became light, on the sixth morning, they scanned the horizon in vain; the chase was gone, and they never even learned her name. On the lower deck she was afterwards believed to have been a phantom. On the quarter-deck they did not think that; they had no such consolation. Charles was standing by the quarter-rail with a fellow-midshipman named Finucane, when it became certain at last that they had lost their race. They were both tired out with the long strain, and the disappointment was too much for them. Finucane leaned his head upon the rail and sobbed. Charles felt furious with him because he knew that he was in danger of doing the same himself. "Dry up!" he said; "dry up! here's the captain." He was too late, the captain had already seen what was going on. He began to come towards them, but turned away very suddenly

## 62. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

and went to his cabin. The two mids dined with him that evening, and after dinner, when the King's



"For the five days and nights the chase lasted"

health had been drunk, he took his sword and laid it on the table. "Gentlemen," he said to the officers, "I take you all to witness that if anything happens to

me this sword is the property of Mr. Finucane. I have found out to-day that he and I are very nearly related." Charles never told the reason of this curious scene, and no one else knew what the captain meant till his will was read after his death.

The frigate now made for the rendezvous of the Fleet, off Toulon, but on the way she touched at Port Mahon in the island of Minorca, which was then used as a naval base by England, and brought away the mails. Among the letters was one to the captain, telling him of the death of his grandfather, old Sir Peter, at the age of ninety. As his father, too, had already been dead some years, Captain Parker succeeded to the title, and was now Sir Peter Parker, Baronet. That was a famous old name in the Service, but its new owner set about regilding it at once.

On the 29th of February the *Menelaus* was cruising to the eastward when she saw a strange sail on her port-bow. It was a French sixteen-gun brig, coming up from Genoa with stores for Toulon arsenal. Seeing that it was hopeless to try and slip past the English frigate, her captain ran her into the bay of Fréjus and anchored her right under the fortifications, which consisted of three strong batteries. But as the *Menelaus* did not sheer off, he became uneasy, and took every precaution he could think of against being cut out. First he dropped two more anchors ahead; then he carried two hawsers from the ship to the shore and made them actually fast to the nearest battery; finally, he passed a third hawser under the ship and made

## 64 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

it fast on shore below the water-line. This, he hoped, being under water the whole way, would escape notice, and prevent the English, even if they boarded the brig, from taking her out.

All these precautions, and the batteries with their guns ready loaded and run out, may have seemed very formidable to the French; Sir Peter saw that they did not really much affect the position. In those days there were no searchlights; the batteries would not know when to fire or what to fire at; and if his men once got aboard the brig he was pretty sure they would not come back without her. The moon was his only trouble, but she fortunately ran into a bank of cloud by eight o'clock, and he sent off his boats at once.

In them went the first lieutenant, Mainwaring, and all the midshipmen and mates of the ship; the frigate herself stood in very slowly, with lights darkened, and broadside ready to open on the batteries if necessary. It was not necessary; the boats got pretty close without being challenged; there was a single volley of round shot, grape, and canister, three hearty cheers, a quick scramble up the sides of the brig, some very hasty work with pistols and cutlasses, nearly all bad shots, and a good deal of splashing and swearing, as the enemy made off for the shore. In two minutes more the lanterns were out, the English topmen were aloft, and the cables were cut; before the battery commanders could be sure the ship was taken, she was actually under way. They fired, of course, but at first every shot went over the ship. Then when she began to draw off the shore, hardly a shot missed her. Every man

was sent down below except the helmsman—Mainwaring himself—and the prize was soon beyond her late owners' reach. They had seen the last of the *St. Joseph*; and at Toulon the arsenal waited in vain for those stores.

After this the *Menelaus* went hungry for nearly two months. On the 19th of April letters arrived from England, and Sir Peter read aloud to the whole ship's company the vote of thanks passed by the Houses of Parliament to those officers and men who had taken part in the capture of Mauritius. But there was little satisfaction now in that; it was rather like being reminded of last year's Christmas dinner. Meanwhile the French had decided that the *Menelaus* was too troublesome to be endured; they were missing those stores and afraid of missing more. So they sent out not one frigate, but two, to make sure of her, and one of the two was a very large and fine one. The *Menelaus* sighted them on the morning of April the 27th, and knew in a moment what they were there for, because the French fleet was not out that day, and their cruisers did not generally scout in pairs. Sir Peter was radiant with joy; he hoisted colours at every masthead, with a Jack at the forestay and another over the taffrail, ran out both his broadsides, and steered straight for his two enemies. For a moment or two they seemed to be coming on, and the wind, which was on their larboard quarter, carried the sound of their drums over the still water. Then their after-sails were seen to be shivering, the drums stopped beating, and to the astonishment and rage of everyone on board the *Menelaus*, both ships wore, like skaters turning



## 66 · THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

round on their heels, and were off home on the opposite tack. Sir Peter held on after them, hauling his wind and firing his bow-chasers; the *Menelaus* gained perceptibly, and if she had had sea-room there would have been a fight yet; but the wind just served the Frenchmen, and the Isles of Hyères prevented her from cutting them off before they made the harbour of Toulon. Her men shook their fists and shouted, "Send us three next time"; they meant it, and they hoped that next time might be next day.

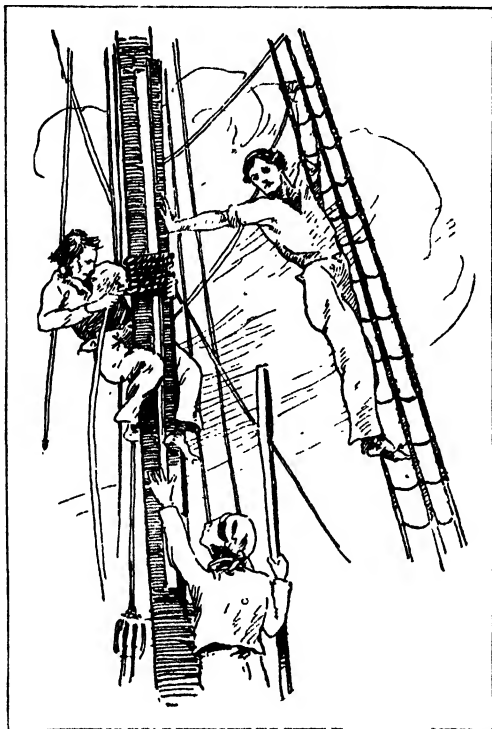
It was in fact four days afterwards that they got the next chance of showing their teeth. On the 1st of May the *Menelaus* was cruising between Cape Sicie and Cape Cepel on the west side of Toulon roads—"polishing Cape Sicie" as the men called it—and behind her, much further to the west, was the British in-shore squadron of four battleships. The wind had shifted to the ESE., and she was tacking slowly across when she saw right over the other side the harbour mouth two ships under all sail, running for the harbour with the wind almost behind them. They were the forty-gun frigate *Pauline*, and the sixteen-gun brig *Ecureil*, and Sir Peter saw that if the *Menelaus* did her best she might just get across the entrance of the road in time to cut them off and force them to fight. But the moment she started off on the starboard tack, the Frenchmen both shortened sail—it looked as if they too desired the meeting. The *Menelaus* stood on until she was in the very entrance of the road, and then she understood their game. They had seen what she could not see—that the French fleet was in the act of weighing to come

out—eleven sail of the line and six frigates. Sir Peter still thought he had just time for a fight; he slipped across under the very noses of the fleet and began firing into the *Pauline* and *Ecureil* at half musket-shot distance. In less than half an hour he had all but silenced them, but they stood inshore under Point Ecampeborion and the batteries there opened upon the *Menelaus*. They did very little harm to her hull or crew, but they cut up her rigging, and one lucky shot struck her fore topmast and cut it almost through. If it had gone she would have been so crippled that nothing could have saved her from destruction. But her company had learned to sail her like a yacht in a race, ready for every possible emergency. Sir Peter instantly gave the order to wear, and as she came round the topmen were already lashing her wounded topmast in splints made of half a dozen capstan bars. Even then she could not run for her own fleet, because the French line of battle was already between; and her friends could not come to her help, for they were hull down to leeward. There was only the possibility left of getting away to the south, passing down the whole French line and giving them all a flying shot at her in turn: "something like pigeon-shooting," says Chamier, "where, if the bird is missed by the man in, about a thousand stragglers take the liberty of knocking it down."

The danger was so great that Sir Peter made all his preparations for being sunk or captured. He destroyed all his private letters, placed the signal-book in its leaden box, ready to be thrown overboard, and then "looked round the quarters quite

## 68. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

unconcerned, and walked on deck as leisurely as if he had a prospect of saving the frigate." He took up his position on the carronade slide on the larboard side, abreast of the wheel, and gave his orders. The



"The topmen were already lashing her wounded topmast"

French fleet was doing five knots, the *Menelaus* nine. She began to pass their rear ship at pistol-shot distance: "Calmly did we stand the broadside of her—to return it was useless: besides, firing puts down the wind, and the harder it blew the better for us.

We passed ship after ship, each firing as we came abreast, and each ceasing when her second ahead commenced." At last they reached the headmost ship—an 80-gun ship—if this broadside failed to hit the frigate's masts, she was safe. Not a word was heard on board; the master himself was steering, fearlessly determined to run it close and not lose an inch of ground. The next moment the Frenchman roared her broadside; the shot whistled clean over the *Menelaus*. She swept past the beam of her big enemy in a flash; the master handed the wheel to the quartermaster, and mopped his forehead.

As the frigate made off the two leading ships of the French line were nearly in her wake, and they followed her keenly in hopes of something giving way aloft. But the "fishes" kept the topmast firm, and she walked away from her big enemies. The excitement on board was intense, and so was the relief, but it was believed by Charles and his friends that the captain himself regretted the chance of fighting for his life with two ships of the line. They soon came to think that they too regretted it; perhaps they really did, for courage is quite as catching as timidity. Anyhow, they now began to have a new idea of their ship—they seemed to have found out her character. Being a brand-new ship she had no nickname yet, no special mark of character such as the "Billy Ruffian" or the "Saucy Arethusa"; but after these two last adventures they felt that they suddenly knew what she was. She was not merely "dashing"—of course every frigate was that—she was not exactly "saucy" or "flashy," she was "bold," she was the sort to

## 70 · THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

face things, and see them out. From that time onwards she had her own name—she was the *Bold Menelaus*.

They were quite right; she had made her mark. The Admiral—Sir Edward Pellew—had already written home an account of her affair with the *St. Joseph*; he now gave Sir Peter command of a small cruiser squadron, consisting of the *Menelaus*, *Havannah*, and *Furieuse*, frigates, and the *Pelorus* brig, and ordered him to reconnoitre the fleet and defences of Toulon. On the 18th of May, while this duty was being carried out, the whole French fleet weighed and came out of harbour. Sir Peter kept his ships dancing about them, hoping for a challenge from their frigates—there were eight of them, backed by four three-deckers and seventeen more of the line. The frigates declined the offer, but at last he saw a chance. A seventy-four and a frigate had got into an awkward position at the harbour mouth, and seemed uncertain whether to go on or beat back. Sir Peter instantly signalled to the *Furieuse* to call up the British Fleet, and went right at the two ships with the *Menelaus* and the *Havannah*. The Frenchmen tried in vain to get their broadsides to bear; they were no match for the English frigates at manœuvring. They edged under a couple of forts, but that did not save them, and when they had been raked disastrously the frigate succeeded in escaping. The seventy-four also got back to harbour at last, but not before the two English frigates had hulled her heavily and cut up her rigging so badly that she had to be dismantled next day; her career was over. As for the forts, the *Menelaus*

blew up one of them with a lucky shot, and then made off, exchanging broadsides as she went with the whole French line of battle, to the astonishment and admiration of the British Fleet, which was by this time in sight. She had given the enemy all the exercise they wanted, and they went home again accordingly. In the despatches to Paris they made no mention of this little affair, though it had cost them a battleship.

On the 1st of June the *Menelaus* was ordered to support an attack on Ciotat, a place about twenty miles from Toulon. Seven hundred marines were landed in the early morning, and the frigate was taken in abreast of the Mole, to silence the battery there while they made their assault. This she did, but the troops were unable to get in, and had to be re-embarked. Sir Peter then left the Mole and turned his guns on to a half-moon battery on the Isle Verte, close by. The enemy's fire was brisk at first, but soon slackened. "We have some marines, too," said Sir Peter, and he sent them off in the boats while the gunners worked harder than ever. The marines landed; there was a final broadside, and the battery was rushed. Another hour and Beynon, the lieutenant of marines, was back on board, reporting that he had spiked the guns and destroyed the battery. So the *Menelaus* at any rate did not go home without scoring.

#### 4. SAN STEFANO

You may think that after four or five months of this sort of life, cruising close to the enemy, with

## 72 . THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

a chance every day of chasing or\* being chased, or fighting a duel with a fort or a couple of frigates, Charles would become so used to it as to be no longer excited, but to take everything as a matter of course. This is not quite what happened. No doubt he was able to take things more coolly; he learned to keep his head both in the moment of action and when looking back at it afterwards. He no longer "sailed large," as he used to do, when he wrote home; on the contrary, he sent his father accounts of his adventures in very sober, long, restrained phrases, the sort of language suitable for despatches written by an admiral of fifty. Being now eighteen, he thought himself not only a man but a man of some standing, and carefully imitated the manners of the lieutenants, in hope of being one himself before long. But underneath he was just as enthusiastic as ever, and if he had used all the strongest words he could think of, he would never have been able to say how much he admired his captain. Sir Peter was a kind and generous friend to all his officers, but he specially loved his midshipmen, and they one and all adored him, talked of him, and wrote about him. If you could read all the letters written in these years by Charles and by his friends Harry Finucane and George Monroe, I believe you would find a good deal more in them about their captain than about themselves. A distinguished soldier who once spent a few days in the *Menelaus* said that her officers were like a knight and his squires in the days of chivalry, and the midshipmen, he declared, habitually said "St. Peter" when they meant "Sir Peter." Charles was so much annoyed at that, that it must have been

very nearly true: and whether he ever said it or not, there is no doubt that St. Peter was his patron saint.

He had a fresh proof of this soon after the fight at Ciotat. On the 25th of June the Admiral sent a frigate to take the place of the *Menelaus*, and it was known at once that she brought sailing orders for Sir Peter, because he began to write letters for home, and told his officers that they had better do the same. An hour later he sent for Charles and asked him how old he was and how many years' service he had. These were not difficult questions to answer, but Charles knew in a flash what they meant, and his heart thumped so that he could hardly speak steadily. To be made a lieutenant it was necessary to be over eighteen, to have been more than six years on the books, and to pass an examination conducted by a board of post-captains. Charles was now eighteen and a half, and he had served for six and a half years. "Very good," said Sir Peter, "then there are three things that I should like you to do. First, I think you should write to-day to the Navy Office to get your certificate of service made out and sent to you. Then I should like you to enter yourself for six months' duty as master's mate in this ship. We shall be making prizes soon, I hope, and some of them may have to be taken in to distant ports. The third thing must wait awhile; but if all goes well I should advise you, when we are in port or in the fleet again, to ask to go before a board of examiners."

You will think perhaps that Charles was overwhelmed with joy; this was certainly the greatest



## 74 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

thing that had ever yet happened to him—his captain, his hero, Sir Peter himself, thought him worthy of promotion. He felt like a new man, with a new career opening before him. But it was just that that made him almost inclined to draw back. When an officer was promoted, it was almost always a vacancy in another ship that was given him.

"Thank you, Sir Peter," Charles said; "I will do everything you are good enough to suggest; and I am most grateful, but . . . but that will mean leaving the *Menelaus*."

Sir Peter looked at him very kindly. "We must all part some day," he said; "meanwhile go and write that letter."

Charles was entered as master's mate that same day, and early next morning the frigate sailed for Palermo, with orders to cruise afterwards between the islands of Ponza and Elba. She had reached the end of her beat, and was going north again, when she saw a French xebec—a three-masted ship with lateen sails—close under Cercello Point. It was only 2 o'clock in the afternoon and the French captain saw that he had no chance of getting away, so he ran the xebec on shore right under a square fortified tower near San Felicità. There was a second tower on the shore which flanked her, and both of them mounted long guns. But Sir Peter knew his gunners could keep down the fire of any fort of reasonable size: he cleared for action at once, and ordered Charles to go forward with the lead and take the frigate in—if possible to within point-blank shot of the xebec. All went well: at 3.45 she was in 7½ fathoms and let go her anchor within half

gunshot of the shore. She immediately opened a rattling fire on the towers, and the boats, under cover of it, made straight for the xebec. They got her off without much difficulty, though as they were on the way back to the ship the gunners in the tower fired a round of grape at them, which killed one seaman and wounded several others. This was a very small loss; in fact it was a small affair altogether, but it started a feeling that nothing on that coast was safe from the *Menelaus*, and Sir Peter was determined that everything he did should keep up that belief.

A week later, on August 7th, as the frigate was tacking northwards with a light wind, she sighted a gun brig off Monte Argentario, a big headland which stands right out on the west coast of Italy and forms the bay of Orbetello. The brig was not in a position to get into the bay, so she ran for the island of Giglio opposite, where there was a fortified harbour. By the time she was safely moored it was late in the afternoon; the *Menelaus* reconnoitred the harbour in hope of finding it suitable for a night attack, but the batteries on the island all began firing at once, and as the dusk fell the whole coast was alive with alarm lights. There was nothing to be done that night, and next morning at daybreak the brig was sighted with two smaller vessels running for the mainland. The frigate made all sail to cut them off, but when she was seen to be gaining the Frenchmen hauled up for the port of San Stefano in Orbetello Bay. Sir Peter was determined to have them out, and at once reconnoitred the harbour, but the appearance of it was not encouraging. The ships

## 76 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

were moored within half musket shot of the shore, the brig with six cables; and the shore was defended by two batteries, one of two guns and one of four, a tower with one long gun, and a citadel with fourteen.

Evidently a surprise would be the most likely kind of attack for such a strong position. The *Menelaus* pretended to be no longer bold: she stood out to sea as if the game was up, and in a few hours was out of sight beyond the island of Monte Cristo. She gave the enemy the rest of that day and the whole of the next to forget her, but that was not nearly long enough. When she ran down again on the night of the 9th, and sent her boats into the harbour, they were signalled at once, though it was nearly midnight, and so hot a fire was opened that Sir Peter saw it could not be faced without the help of the frigate's guns. He called off his men and again stood out to sea, planning a fresh attack for two days later.

The new plan was this: the *Menelaus* was to enter the harbour after dark and lie off ready to engage the attention of the citadel. The four-gun battery on the hillside, which contained three very big guns—forty-two-pounders—and would be in a position to rake the frigate as well as the boats, was to be attacked by a landing-party of marines. If they were successful the cutting-out party would then make a dash for the brig; and with luck the whole affair would be over before daylight. One more point was noted in the despatch afterwards sent home by the Admiral. "The service being of a most desperate nature, to which in the event of failure an imputation of rashness might attach, Sir Peter

resolved to lead the attack himself." He accordingly put the ship in charge of the first lieutenant, Rowland Mainwaring, and ordered Lieutenants Crease and Pierson, with all the midshipmen and mates and 130 seamen, to go with him in the gigs and cutters; the forty marines under their own lieutenants, Beynon and Wilcocks, were to have the launch, with an eighteen-pounder carronade mounted in the bow. Finally, to avoid any possible mistakes in the dark, the different parties were instructed to use a sign and countersign—"Nelson" and "Wellington."

Nothing now remained but to whistle up a sufficient wind, and that seemed less and less hopeful as time went on. The 11th of August was cloudless and almost windless. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the frigate was scarcely moving. But Mr. Rutherford, the master who had succeeded Mr. Cunningham, was prepared, as he said, to fetch a wind from the sky if he couldn't find one on the water—he got up his sky-sail masts and assured everybody that all would be right at the right time. At 7 o'clock he set royals, royal studding-sails, skysails, and moonsails, and as the twilight fell the frigate began to move towards Orbetello Bay like a phantom floating over the still water. At 8.30 the boats were lowered very quietly; at 10 they were still more quietly armed. Lights began to come out all along the shore; overhead there were stars but no moon.

The *Menelaus* now entered the bay in dead silence. Sanderson, master's mate of the ship, was at the wheel; the master himself was forward, standing close to Charles, who was heaving the lead from the larboard fore-chains and whispering, instead of

## 78 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

crying, the depth of the soundings. At 11 the marines were put into the launch and rowed off to a point about 150 yards from the heavy battery. Before midnight the other four boats were lying off waiting for them to make their attack. They got ashore with the greatest caution, but it was very slow work, and 1 o'clock struck before they were ready to move. At that moment Charles, who was in the last boat with Lieutenant Pierson, saw a flash straight beyond the landing-place, and the sound of the shot was followed by a wild noise of shouting from the sentinel who had fired it. Another shot answered from the slope above, and more shouting. Then over the still water Beynon's voice could be heard quietly and very distinctly giving the order to charge. A volley immediately flashed out from above, which seemed to Charles near enough and heavy enough to destroy the whole party, but he knew a moment after that it had not done so, for it was followed by more shouting in the fort itself, among which English voices could be distinguished quite plainly. The men in the boats became desperately keen to know how the fight was going: at last one of them shouted "Nelson," and a big voice from the fort answered "Wellington." The sailors all replied together and were again answered from above; for several minutes the bay and the hillside echoed and re-echoed "Nelson"—"Wellington"—"Nelson," till the marines, having spiked all the guns and picked up their wounded men, came down to the shore and were re-embarked.

By this time the news had reached the citadel, and lights were being hung out on the brig to direct their

fire; but before the boats came within range the frigate opened on the town with her broadside. She was too far off either to do much damage or to run much risk as long as it was dark; but she kept the troops in the citadel busy, making shots at the flash of her guns, and Sir Peter's men had only to face the musketry fire from the shore, which was wild and harmless. They boarded the brig immediately and cut her adrift; there was not a breath of wind stirring, so Sir Peter set to work to tow her out with two boats. The other two he sent to destroy a bombard which had been run on shore and deserted by her crew. Pierson and Charles were in one of these two boats, and Finucane and Monroe in the other. They took some time over their job, for they had to scuttle the bombard—to burn her would have been to give the enemy too good a light.

Up to this time they had been completely successful, but now came a very anxious half-hour. The enemy, finding that their ships were lost, began to fire at them, and as they knew their position pretty exactly they made rather better shooting. The towing-cable of the brig was immediately cut in two by a round shot, and as soon as the loss was made good the sharp swish of grape-shot was heard upon the water. Pierson's men rowed their hardest and got clear, but Finucane's boat was struck in the stern, and Charles knew that some one was hit by the sound of the orders which he heard being given. No questions were asked; both boats went on at full speed. Charles began to think gloomy thoughts: he remembered that dawn would be coming soon, and there was not a puff of

## 80 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

wind to carry the *Menelaus* and her prize out of range.

At that moment fortune changed again: unexpectedly, miraculously, a fine breeze sprang up, and when Charles sighted the brig she was getting under sail, and Sir Peter was making straight for the frigate. He was at the gangway to receive the other boats, inquiring as each came aboard what casualties they had had. In the first three there had been only one seaman killed and one wounded; but when Finucane's turn came, he said in a slow steady voice: "We have had a terrible misfortune, sir; we have lost Monroe."

Sir Peter made no reply: he took the dead midshipman in his arms and knelt to support him, feeling his heart, listening for his breathing, and even calling him by his name. The men brought battle lanterns and stood round in a wide circle; over the water the guns of the citadel went on flashing and booming. No one paid any attention to them; everyone looked intently at the surgeon who was now kneeling too. Sir Peter was sure, desperately sure, that there was a faint sign of life; the surgeon, after a very careful examination, said that it was too late to hope. Sir Peter rose to his feet. "I will not give him up," he said, and he ordered the dead boy to be carried to his own cabin and laid in his own cot. Then he stood still for a moment to regain control over himself.

Before he looked up again the brig ran alongside and touched with a slight shock; the boatswain instantly grappled her to the frigate's quarter, and the two ships began to move slowly ahead together. Sir

Peter raised his head and saw what was being done; he saw also Charles and Finucane watching him like two dogs. Very quietly he asked Charles to provision the prize, take ten men aboard, and sail her into port. Then he gripped Finucane by the arm



"He took the dead midshipman in his arms"

and walked aft with him; Charles went about his own business with a feeling of great weariness. Day broke as the two ships left the bay.

Six days later the brig came safely into the harbour of Valetta where the *Menelaus* was already moored. Charles went aboard to report himself; Sir



## 82 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

Peter was ashore, the first lieutenant told him, and he added: "He was hard hit over that affair; he has not smiled since." And in fact it was long before Charles saw his captain smile again.

But this was no gain to the enemy. By the beginning of September the *Menelaus* was back again on her beat, and Sir Peter more determined than ever to sweep that coast of all flags but the British. On 3rd September, while standing inshore to the north of Civita Vecchia, he sighted a large letter-of-marque, or privateer, the *Saint Esprit*, lying at anchor in the mouth of the river Mignone. She appeared to carry fourteen guns, and she was close under two strong batteries. But to the *Menelaus* she seemed an easy prize. As soon as it was dark two boats under Lieutenant Mainwaring went in and brought her out without losing a man, though the enemy's roundshot and grape ploughed the water on every side of them. The following day looked like being a really interesting one. Three sloops-of-war hove in sight to the north; their guns were probably not very heavy, but they mounted forty-eight between them, as against the forty-nine of the English frigate, and they would have the advantage of being able to rake her, by attacking all at once from different directions. Unfortunately they had heard of the *Menelaus*, and did not stop to count up guns or advantages; they made straight for Port Ercole, under the south side of Monte Argentario, and there they moored safely enough—not even Sir Peter could cut out three men-of-war with crews outnumbering his own.

But he looked sterner than ever as he passed on,

for here he was near San Stefano once more. The harbour was deserted this time, but Charles was not surprised when he heard the order given for the frigate to stand in. In broad daylight she passed abreast of the batteries and the citadel; Sir Peter stood alone by the starboard quarter-rail, and Charles as he watched him knew how he must be thinking of George Monroe. Then a bugle-call sounded in the town, and a gun boomed across the harbour: the gunners in the citadel were trying the range. The officers on the quarter-deck all looked towards their captain; he could not have seen them but he shook his head, as if to answer them and the enemy. The *Menelaus* went her way in silence, sweeping the whole bay northward to Talamone.

But Sir Peter was more than ready to fight wherever there was anything to fight about. He had seen, at the mouth of the salt-water lagoon called the Lake of Orbetello, a large French merchant vessel moored under the guns of a formidable looking tower. According to his usual custom, he gave the enemy two days' law, in order to put them off their guard, and then came suddenly back on the night of the 5th. In the bright starlight the frigate was unluckily sighted, but Sir Peter anchored her under fire, and led the boat attack himself while the duel of the big guns was going on. He took the prize without difficulty, but had a narrow escape in bringing her out. The enemy turned their fire upon her the moment they saw her beginning to move, and at so short a range they could hardly miss a good mark. For some minutes too she masked the fire of the frigate, so that their aim was undisturbed;

## 84 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA .

they hulled her repeatedly, and it was surprising that she suffered so little. But one shot cut a seaman in two, and another which smashed the taffrail brought Sir Peter down with a splinter in the breast. It was not a dangerous wound, but when they knew of it the whole ship's company wanted to land and storm the tower with cutlasses.

### 5. THE GOLDEN GALLEON

The *Menelaus* now rejoined her fleet, and was soon afterwards sent to reconnoitre the bay of Marseilles. On the morning of the 17th she looked into the harbour of Méjan, and saw a number of vessels there, some of which were pierced for guns. The place did not appear to be very strongly defended, though there were barracks, a custom-house, and magazines. Sir Peter determined, though it was midday, to risk a bold stroke at once. He planned his attack exactly as at San Stefano; the launch, under Mr. Saunderson, the master's mate, landed Lieutenant Beynon and his marines on the enemy's flank, and they dislodged the troops from the sea front, while Lieutenants Mainwaring and Yates with all the midshipmen and a hundred seamen took and burnt the shipping. The boats' crews then landed and joined the marines in an attack on the buildings; they succeeded in burning the custom-house and the magazines, but in doing so they had some sharp fighting at close quarters, in which six men were wounded and Lieutenant Yates was shot through the heart. "Never was gallantry more conspicuous"—but the result was to rob Sir Peter of two of his friends, for Mainwaring's

promotion was decided by this day's work, and he left the *Menelaus* in December to command a ship of his own.

The next few weeks were dull; but then the frigate was ordered to patrol the north-east coast of Spain, below the Gulf of Lyons. So for the whole of November she was cruising between Cape Creux and Cape Tortosa, making a good many prizes, and sending them into Port Mahon. At the end of the month she was sent to Malta once more; Mainwaring left, and Lieutenant Richardson came aboard to take his place. By this time Charles had his certificate ready; he had received it, to his great pleasure, in a letter from Captain Bouverie, to whom it had been sent by Lord Radnor when the *Medusa* was refitting in Plymouth Dock. He had now only to get a character from his captain, and present himself for examination. The form which he laid before Sir Peter for his signature was one which he got from the junior lieutenant; it ran as follows:

"These are to certify the Principal Officers and Commissioners of His Majesty's Navy that Mr. — served as Midshipman on board H.M.S. *Menelaus* under my command, from the 22nd May 1810 to the 25th June 1812, during which time he behaved with diligence, attention, and sobriety; and was ever obedient to command." Sir Peter signed the paper at once: then he read it through, half to himself. "Diligence—attention—sobriety," he said, "that's your view of the candidate, not mine." He took up the pen again and wrote underneath: "Mr. — has had charge of a watch on board the *Menelaus*, and has taken in four prizes—and I have great reason to be satisfied with

## 86. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

his conduct in every particular. Peter Parker, Captain, *Menelaus*."

When Charles handed his papers to the Board of Officers before whom he was summoned, he saw the presiding post-captain stop for a moment at this postscript. "Very well, sir," he said to Charles. "I see that you have already been examined, and passed, by a severer judge: but we will, if you please, ask you a few questions."

They did so; but Charles was not for a moment embarrassed—they were asking him not to answer riddles but to give them information. How Sir Peter sailed and fought his ship, what he did in every kind of emergency, what the *Menelaus* and her company could do and had done—all this they wanted to know in minutest detail, and Charles was so proud to tell it that he quite forgot he was being examined. It was only after they had all shaken hands with him and congratulated him that he realised what was happening. He had in that hour outgrown his midshipman's jacket—he might find himself in the Navy List any day. But "any day" might still be a long way off, and he almost hoped that it would. His wish was to be with Sir Peter as long as they both lived, and, as often happens, he had his wish, and sorrow with it.

From Malta the *Menelaus* went home with a large and very slow convoy: she only reached Portsmouth in May. In July she was sent, in company with the old *Superb*, to chase and if possible capture the American 44-gun frigate *President*, which had been making a good deal of trouble on the North American station. The *Bellerophon* and *Hyperion* were also

hunting for the *President*, but she dodged them all by crossing over to the coast of Ireland, and then slipping back by a very northerly course into Newport harbour. It was not until January 1815 that she was taken by the *Endymion*.

In December 1813 the *Menelaus* joined the English fleet off Brest, under Lord Keith, and with the turn of the year she began the final chapter of her adventures. She was ordered to look out for privateers, and especially for the *Ecureil*, an 18-gun sloop with a very strong crew of 200 men, which had been successful in taking several ships in the Channel and was expected to be returning there shortly on the same errand. The *Menelaus* sighted her early in the morning of the 17th of January, and the chase began at once in a gale which grew stiffer and stiffer as the day went on. The wind was ENE. and the *Ecureil* began by trying to beat back for some French port to the south. But she soon found that on that course the frigate could carry more sail and cut her off; so she bore up and made for the open sea. The *Menelaus* was soon in her wake, and gained upon her all day; but she was a fine sailer, and her crew were quite desperate. Again and again they cracked on more canvas and drew away, but Mr. Collins, the new master of the *Menelaus*, replied to the challenge each time, until both ships were carrying as much as their lives were worth. Time after time they rolled heavily as the great seas came up behind them, and Charles knew that if either of them should broach to for half a second she would be over without a chance. But the sense of danger was lost in the excitement and

## 88. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

determination of the chase. The day was dying and the frigate was gaining with exactly equal rapidity : it was a race against time as well as against the enemy. The sun set in a wild sky ; a red glow came up on the starboard bow, and before it faded a shot or two was fired from the bow-chasers of the *Mene-laus* : but in such a deceptive light and with both ships yawing continually no one could expect a hit. At half-past six it was all but dark, and everyone was wondering what the end would be. The frigate was believed to be closing upon the chase ; on the forecastle the grappling irons were ready and the gunners were standing by the carronades. Suddenly a shout was heard : man overboard, thought Charles, and he ran to the side with several others. As he did so there was a sudden shock, the frigate shivered as if she had struck a shoal and then staggered forward again. The *Ecureil* had gone right over on her broadside, and the *Menelaus* had cut through her as a ploughshare cuts through a mound of clay.

Sir Peter was very silent over this disaster ; he seemed to grieve for his enemies almost as if they had been his friends. The whole ship's company understood this and agreed with him ; they would have killed every man of the two hundred in a fight, and thought of it afterwards with nothing but satisfaction, but the helplessness of such a death as this, and the remembrance that it might well have happened to themselves, could not fail to touch their imagination. It touched Charles deeply, but there was something in him too which said "at any rate they all went down together." Still it was always thought of and spoken of as a misfortune, and a very

extraordinary one. Ships in plenty had capsized or been run down in collision, but who had ever heard of any enemy being both blown over and run over in a chase?

A piece of good fortune almost unearned came to the *Menelaus* within a month after this. On the 1st of February a large and very richly laden Spanish ship, the *San Juan Baptista*, from Lima, was captured by two 40-gun French frigates, the *Atalante* and *Terpsichore*. They were met the very next day by H.M.S. *Majestic*, a 56-gun ship, Captain Hayes, who immediately attacked and captured the *Terpsichore*. The *Atalante* made off during the action without firing a shot, and took the prize with her. No doubt her commander, Captain Mallet, was tempted to do this by the great value of the *San Juan*, which carried a very large treasure in gold as well as her rich cargo. But the luck was against him even when he ran away, for twelve days later when he was close to L'Orient, the port for which he was making, the *Menelaus* came down upon him and he ran once more, leaving the prize to be snapped up without a shot on either side. Among the prisoners taken in her were a French lieutenant and two midshipmen; they were miserable at being captured, and it was not to be wondered at, for they had lost in one short hour both their prize and their chances of promotion. Sir Peter accordingly made a point of treating them with every courtesy. He entertained them at his own table, and when they were taken off the ship at Plymouth he returned to them all their private property, and begged them to accept a large sum of money for their immediate expenses. I have no



## 90. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

doubt he would have done this in any case, but he could particularly well afford to be generous just then. The Lima ship, as she was always called afterwards, was a really golden prize, the fulfilment of the most romantic dreams. It became evident at once that the French prize-crew of twenty-three men who were taking her in had been plundering already, and it was decided to search them. This was done as decently as possible; a screen was run up on the starboard side of the after-part of the main-deck of the *Menelaus*, and the operation was conducted under the directions of the master, the master-at-arms, and the sergeant of marines. The poor lieutenant had to submit first; and I regret to say that under his epaulettes, instead of the usual cotton stuffing, there were found twelve gold doubloons. Round the bodies of the common seamen were loads of doubloons sewn in canvas, "the gold coin being in layers of four each, and the doublet going the full round of the back, where it was laced like a pair of ladies' stays." Many had gold hidden in their hair, in their mouths, or under their armpits. As the coins were discovered they were thrown into a midshipman's hat, and as each hat was filled it was taken away to the captain's cabin and poured out upon the sofa, where some of the mids. larked with it, till Sir Peter came in and laughed at them. From the 23 prisoners they recovered in this way no less than £12,000; and from their chests all kinds of jewellery, watches, and silver plate, the property of the late Duke of Medina Sidonia.

"Amongst the valuables found in the lieutenant's box was a peacock in virgin silver; the eyes and

all the ornaments of the tail were studded with precious stones, the whole being one of the most beautiful ornaments to a dinner-table ever seen in England. It was made a present to the Prince Regent by universal consent, and is now in the plate-room of his present Majesty in Windsor Castle."

The capture of this rich Spanish galleon on St. Valentino's day excited the imagination of the sailors; they yarned about it all day, and the purser's steward even wrote a poem on it, with much effort. It was only two lines long, but it had a great success and was quoted everywhere:

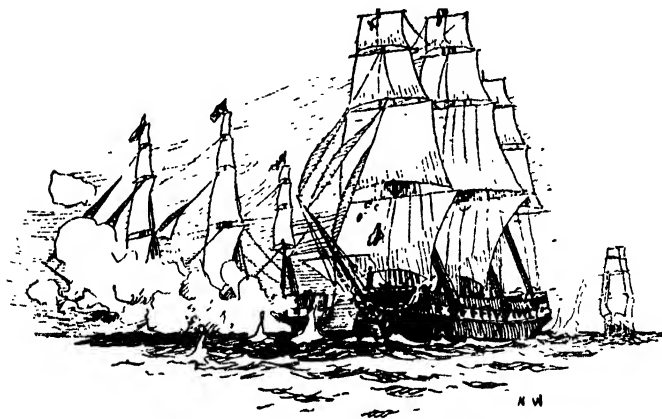
"Dug from Lima's golden mine  
We hail it as our Valentine."

The *Menelaus* was not going to risk her prize, as the *Atalante* had done; she took her to Plymouth, and saw her safely anchored. The sensation they caused there was tremendous, for as they entered the Sound the sailors amused themselves by hanging watches from the yardarms of the prize and decorating the trucks with golden candelabra. In the end they had a little wholesome disappointment, for the *Menelaus* had to share equally with the *Rippon*, which had been in sight of the capture, and the *San Juan Baptista*, being a recaptured ship, was not declared a prize but had to pay salvage only; still, on her freight and her seven hundred thousand pounds in gold, the salvage was a round sum. The captain's share of it came to between eleven and twelve thousand pounds, even the midshipmen got

## 92. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

£250 apiece, and the ordinary seamen about £50, or the equivalent of three years' wages.

The *Menelaus* returned to her station off Brest. On the 22nd of March she had an affair with two large French frigates, which looked at first like being a repetition of the Toulon disappointment, but turned out very differently. The frigates re-



---

"Gave them her broadside repeatedly as they passed in"

fused, as in the other case, to stand up and fight, but when they ran for Brest harbour the *Menelaus* got ahead of them and gave them her broadside repeatedly as they passed in. It was now six o'clock in the evening, but the noise of her guns, so close inshore, brought out an 80-gun ship (the French 80-gun ships were as large as our 98's) determined to chastise her. Sir Peter saw that a

two-decker would have great difficulty in manœuvring in the teeth of the south-wester which was then blowing. He raked her bows as she struggled out, and then drew her after him so skillfully that in an hour's time she was close inshore, with daylight failing, the wind increasing to a gale, and the rocks under her lee. Then the *Menelaus* left her and began to fight with the wind and sea for her own life. All night she fought her way out inch by inch; the two-decker when day broke was on the rocks, and there she went to pieces. The handling of the *Menelaus* was justly considered by Lord Keith as a triumph of daring and seamanship, and Sir Peter and his officers received the special thanks of the Admiralty for it.

They had not yet done with their shy friend Captain Mallet. No sooner had the *Menelaus* got away from the 80-gun ship and the rocks than she sighted the *Atalante*, who had slipped out of L'Orient and was apparently trying to get into Brest. The English frigate once more flew to welcome her, but once more she turned and made off in the direction from which she had come. This time, however, she had not started enough, and soon after rounding the Pointe de Penmarch she found that the *Menelaus* was fast overhauling her. Rather than risk even a running fight she gave up trying to make L'Orient and ran into the little bay of Concarneau, where there was an anchorage well protected by rocks and batteries. Charles and his friends were furious; this Frenchman, they said, had had three chances and had run away from them all: he must be a coward. Sir Peter himself

## 94. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

was afraid that this was true, but he was very anxious for a fight and still hoped that with a little encouragement his enemy might come out. On the 26th he sent in a boat with a flag of truce. In it went Seagrove, the second lieutenant, and Fred Chamier; they carried a formal challenge to the captain of the *Atalante*, begging him not to allow a frigate of only equal force to interfere with his voyage, and offering that if he would weigh, the *Menelaus* should accompany him as far as might be agreed upon between them. This was a kind of challenge not uncommon with the English frigate captains of those days, and Sir Peter was no doubt thinking, when he sent it, of his friend Captain Broke of the *Shannon*, who had enticed the *Chesapeake* out of Boston the year before, by an equally chivalrous invitation.

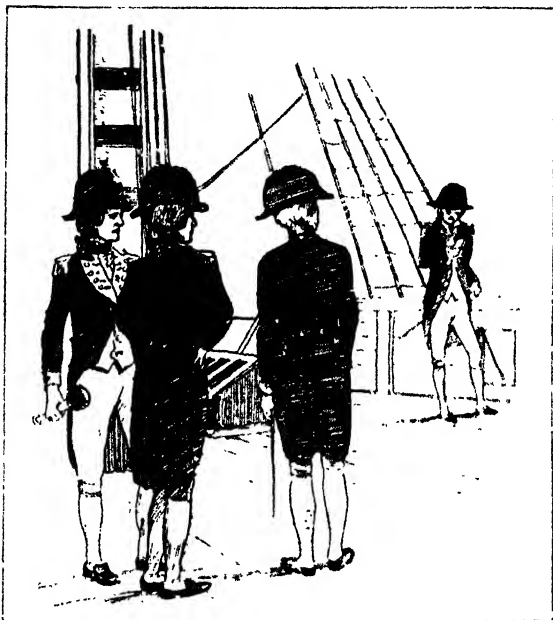
From the quarter-deck of the *Menelaus* an anxious group watched the return of the boat. Seagrove was seen to be holding a letter in his hand, but there was no sign, even as he came on board, that he or Finucane knew what it contained. Sir Peter read it, standing alone on his own side of the deck, but in view of all his officers. Then, after a word or two with Seagrove, he read it aloud to the whole group. It ran as follows:

“MONSIEUR,—La Frégate *Atalante*, que je commande, ne peut sortir d'un port Français que par un ordre de mes chefs: je le réclamerai, mais je ne peux pas assurer que je l'obtiendrai. J'ai l'honneur, &c.,

MALLET,

Capitaine de la Frégate,  
Chevalier en la Légion d'Honneur.”

In Sir Peter's presence everyone was silent, but he knew very well how indignant they must be. "Well, gentlemen," he said, "this is a distinguished officer, and we must hope he will get permission to do himself justice. The *Menelaus* will wait for him."



"Standing alone on his own side of the deck"

She did wait, cruising for a week between Brest and Concarneau and frequently showing herself in the offing. But whatever Captain Mallet may have intended, the time had gone by. Wellington was already in France; on March 31st the Allied armies entered Paris, Buonaparte abdicated, and the war was over.

## 6. SIR PETER PARKER'S LAST FIGHT

Directly the news was known the *Menelaus* was ordered back to Plymouth, and there she soon found herself the centre of very envious admiration. The navy, which had been seriously reduced after Trafalgar, was to be still further cut down; a hundred and thirty ships were to be laid up, and twenty-five of these were to be frigates. One by one, as they came home from their long and splendid service, they left the high seas for ever, and the men who had fought for their country in them, against all the navies of the world that were worth their shot, were turned adrift in the prime of life. But the *Menelaus* was spared for the present: being a new ship, and a strong one, at the highest point of efficiency, she would be useful in the war with America, which was still dragging on with alternate successes and disasters. Now that France was off their hands the Government meant to try harder hitting over there, and Sir Peter was just the man for coast-raiding and landing parties.

Charles got no leave this April; the frigate refitted quickly and sailed for Bordeaux, where she joined the squadron under Admiral Pulteney Malcolm, and on the 2nd of June proceeded with him to Bermuda, where Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane was waiting for them in the 80-gun ship *Tonnant*. From Bermuda the *Menelaus* convoyed the troops to Chesapeake Bay; Sir Alexander, with Major-General Ross and his staff on board, went three days ahead of them and was met by Admiral Cockburn, who had already been reconnoitring the country.

Ross and Cockburn went ashore at once with an escort of marines, and after a rather venturous excursion into the interior they agreed on a plan for attacking Washington, the seat of the American Government. Chesapeake Bay, a long fiord running far inland, offered three principal approaches; the troops were to attack from the Patuxent, the central one of these, while diversions were to be made to left and right—Captain Gordon in the *Seahorse* frigate, with some smaller vessels, was to force his way up the Potomac, and the *Menelaus* was to blockade Baltimore and destroy the shipping all the way up the Chesapeake itself.

This combined operation was well planned, and was completely successful, though Charles and many other people afterwards thought it a useless waste of life and property, for it was a mere raid and had no permanent effect on the war. Still, if an expedition is once decided on there can be no doubt about the duty of following your leader: whether Ross and Cockburn were wise or unwise, they were magnificently backed. Their troops defeated the Americans at Bladensburg, took 10 of their 23 guns, and occupied the city of Washington; Captain Gordon destroyed Fort Washington and captured the town of Alexandria; Sir Peter took the *Menelaus* where no frigate ever sailed before, into waters so narrow that she was frequently moored within pistol-shot of both shores; he burnt ten ships and landed almost every day to attack and break up the enemy's levies and reinforcements. In short, to the last moment of his life he was what he had always been, devoted to the service of his country with a kind of passion



## 98 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

which carried him far beyond the courage of more ordinary men.

Washington was occupied on August 24th and evacuated on the following day; the troops were re-embarked on the 29th. On that day Sir Peter, who had not heard of what had been done, was informed of a militia encampment about a mile inland from where the frigate was then lying, above Baltimore. At daybreak on the 30th he ordered all the boats to be armed, and at 6 o'clock the first lieutenant, Crease, was sent in with them to make the attack. He found that the Maryland men had retired inland to Bellair, and after burning their deserted stores he returned to the ship at 8 o'clock, bringing with him four black refugees. Sir Peter at once decided that it would be best to follow up a retiring enemy; at 10.30 the same night the boats were again manned, and at 11 they landed in dead silence, the sign and countersign being "Brook Street" and "Forty-four."

It was half-past one before the enemy were discovered and their mounted pickets driven in. All chance of a surprise being over, Sir Peter determined to rush the five guns which could be clearly seen drawn up in front of the position. His force was in two divisions, one commanded by Lieutenant Crease with 70 seamen under midshipmen Finucane and Sandes; the other with 35 seamen and 30 marines under their own lieutenants, Beynon and Poe, he was to lead himself, with Lieutenant Pearce, Charles, and two other midshipmen, Pocock and Chamier. These two divisions of about 70 men each he drew up about a hundred yards apart, with orders to advance together, firing volleys, until

he gave the word to charge; they were then to rush in upon the right and left flank of the guns.

At 2 o'clock the advance began; the first volley was answered by musketry, the second drew the fire of the guns, and in the moment's silence which followed Sir Peter's voice was heard, and the charge began. But the Americans had heard too, and came forward at a run to save their guns; there was some fierce rough-and-tumble fighting, in which one gun and its crew were captured, while the other four were got away to the rear. Sir Peter collected his men and followed the enemy to their camp, drove them through it and into a wood beyond, both sides firing as they went.

Then he made the first and last mistake of his life. Forgetting that his men knew nothing of skirmishing tactics, remembering only that he had an unbeaten enemy in front of him, he once more got his whole force together and called upon them for another charge. He led it "with his usual determined courage: his Turkish sabre sparkled in the moonlight as he waved it over his head, and his continual cry of 'Forward! Forward!' resounded amidst the firing." The men followed him with a cheer, and in a moment were all bewildered in the dark twilight of the wood. The Maryland men, though they had run for cover, were full of fight, and excellent shots; moreover, many of them were firing charges of buckshot, which were less deadly than the English bullets but gave far more hits. The seamen tried in vain to come to close quarters with them; the marines fired at shadows, at tree trunks, at the flashes of the guns. Man after man dropped, but

## 100 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

the advance continued; while Sir Peter led them everyone was confident. Suddenly Charles perceived that Sir Peter was no longer leading; he looked along the line, and then behind him: some wounded men were being carried to the rear, and he found himself struggling against a terrible certainty that a great disaster had happened. Then a figure left the group he was watching and ran back towards the fighting line, calling for Beynon. In another moment he heard that Sir Peter was wounded, that Crease had taken over the command, and had ordered an immediate retreat. The men were to be withdrawn slowly, and every sacrifice was to be made to gain time, for Sir Peter was insensible, bleeding from an artery, and must be carried carefully and quickly over the three miles by which they had come.

This rearguard action was the finest thing in the history of the *Menelaus*. Sir Peter's men were worthy of him. They fought every inch of the ground, till they had checked the pursuit and thrown it back; they never wavered, because they never thought of saving themselves. Their effective force dwindled rapidly; ten men had been sent back to the ship with the prisoners taken round the gun, twelve more were carrying Sir Peter in relays, several wounded could not be found in the darkness of the wood. Of the hundred and twenty remaining, thirty-eight more were killed or wounded before the fighting was over, but everyone of them was brought away. This unflinching courage was a splendid tribute to their leader, but it could not save him. His wound was in the thigh and the bleeding could

not be stopped by hasty bandaging; before they reached the surgeon's assistant he was gone. Young Sandes too was dead; Beynon and Poe were both wounded. In their desperate grief the others envied them; they seemed to have shared more nearly with their captain.

Next day the Americans brought down the three remaining wounded, and received their own captured men in exchange. They were generous enemies, these Marylanders, and they spoke with admiration and regret of what had happened. It was no small comfort to Charles to think that Sir Peter had died fighting men of his own sort, chivalrous and patriotic.

The body was embalmed by the surgeon, and the whole ship's company petitioned the Admiral, through Lieutenant Crease, as acting captain, that the *Mene-la-us* might be sent with it to England. This, of course, he could not allow; but finding them obstinate and almost heartbroken, after a month's delay he ordered the frigate to sail for Bermuda, bury Sir Peter there and return to the Chesapeake. The order was obeyed, but a still more urgent petition was sent home to the Admiralty, and eventually the body was ordered to be exhumed and sent home in the *Hebrus* frigate, then to be laid in St. Margaret's, Westminster, to await the return of the *Menelaus*.

It was not until the 13th of May 1815 that she reached Spithead. The moment she came to her moorings a boat left the ship containing Lieutenant Pearce, with Pocock, Finucane and Charles, and ten men chosen by lot from among those who had been

## 102 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

with Sir Peter in his last fight. They travelled to London at full speed, and at six o'clock on the following morning heard the funeral service read for the second time over the grave of the man they adored. On the west wall of St. Margaret's you may see the monument which they placed there to his memory.

Charles's adventures were now ended, and his remaining history can be very shortly told. The recommendation for his promotion, supported by Lord Radnor's influence, was immediately successful, and his seniority as lieutenant was antedated by four months in consideration of his services after Sir Peter's death. On the 19th of June he received his commission as third lieutenant of the *Tyne*, a small frigate under orders for service on the East Indian station. Six months later he became acting second lieutenant, and in September 1816 he was again promoted to first lieutenant of the same ship. Early in 1817 the *Tyne* returned to Plymouth, and at the end of June she was paid off and her officers were all retired. Charles's friends made strenuous efforts to get him a ship; but the navy at that moment had almost ceased to exist as a career. There had been 755 ships afloat when Charles went to sea, twelve years before; there were now only 114 in the Navy List. On the other hand, the sea-going officers available now numbered over 800 post-captains, 600 commanders or sloop captains, and 4000 lieutenants. It was clear then that only one lieutenant in eight could be employed at all, and practically none could be promoted to captain or commander. The only chance for these 5000 derelict

officers was to get a place in the East or West Indian merchant fleets. Charles was one of the few fortunate ones, and after an interval ashore, during which he married, he found himself captain of the West Indiaman *Hamilton*, a fine ship, larger than the *Menelaus*. In her he made regular voyages to Jamaica until 1827, when his friends succeeded in persuading the Admiralty to give him a naval command. But on the homeward voyage he died of yellow fever, in his thirty-fourth year, and his last hammock was slung somewhere in the Sargasso Sea.

# THE ADVENTURES OF BASIL

## 1. THE MIDS. OF THE "LEANDER"

BASIL HALL was born in the Castle of Dunglass, on the east coast of Scotland. He tells us that even before he "shipped a pair of trousers" he felt that he was destined to be a sailor. He was born on the night of a memorable gale. The storm was so violent that the old house shook from top to bottom. The roaring of the surf close at hand, and the whistling of the wind in the drenched forest, made such an impression on the minds of his parents that as soon as the little boy was old enough to understand anything they used to describe the storm to him, and tell him that he was clearly born to pass his life at sea among the winds and waves.

He was sent to the High School at Edinburgh to be educated, but he was not happy there, and disliked especially the discipline and confinement after the freedom of his home life. When his examinations were over, and he could escape to his beloved sea-coast, the first thing he would do was to find his friends the fishermen, and persuade them to take him out for a row. He was always sea-sick on these expeditions, and when he returned he often jumped on shore, vowing he would never sail the seas again—a frame of mind which never lasted longer than it

took to climb the high steep bank that bounded the coast. From here Basil could see far up the Firth of Forth on the one hand, and right out over the German Ocean in front. From here he watched the distant ships coming and going across the mouth of the Firth, and dreamed of the wide seas they had sailed, and the strange countries they had visited, and longed eagerly to follow their wanderings.

Meanwhile, his first independent trial of the water was made on the horse-pond at home. With the help of a carpenter boy he made a ship out of two or three rough logs stolen from the farmyard, and nailed across with planks. A bar from the nearest paling made the mast. The sail was a great difficulty, for they had no money to buy canvas, but Basil's ingenious companion—who distinguished himself in after life as a shipbuilder—suggested the idea of using one of the mats with which the gardener protected his plants from frost. It served its purpose well, and the ship made a prosperous voyage of about ten minutes across this inland sea, to the immense happiness and satisfaction of its captain.

School in Edinburgh after delights of this kind seemed impossibly dull and dreary. "I really do not know what I should have done," he tells us, "had I not lighted accidentally upon Shakspeare's description of the ship-boy reposing on the high and giddy mast." He was so delighted with this that he got hold of all the Plays and read them from beginning to end. He learnt *The Tempest* almost by heart, especially the nautical part, and swore an eternal friendship with the boatswain.

About this time Basil's father introduced him "as



## 106 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

a future brother-seaman" to Lord Duncan, the hero of Camperdown, who was very kind and friendly, and showed him the flag he had taken from Admiral de Winter on the 11th of October 1797. In fact he treated the small boy with such attention and kindness that next morning, when Basil went back to school, he shed torrents of tears as he contrasted his master's reception with that of the Admiral the day before.

On the 16th of May 1802 Basil left home and set out with his father for London, travelling by chaise. It had been arranged that he should join the *Leander*, the flagship of Sir Andrew Mitchell, then fitting in the Thames for the Halifax station. When the actual moment came for leaving home, Basil, in spite of all his enthusiasm, and in spite of having chosen his own profession, and having been most impatient to be off, felt a sudden distrust of himself, and realised for the first time what was meant by the word responsibility. Suppose he failed altogether? Suppose sea-life was, after all, not more enjoyable than that of the High School of Edinburgh? What kind of figure would he cut if he came back, driven by sheer distress, to beg his father to take him home again, and find him some other profession, which might prove after all to be just as difficult as the sea?

But he took care not to let any of these unworthy doubts and alarms show themselves in word or in look; and when he had reached London, and had rigged himself out in a smart midshipman's uniform, with a glittering dirk, he was highly pleased and satisfied with himself, and felt that there was no joke

about the matter now, but that the real business of life was actually about to begin. He was starting a good deal later than our friend Charles, for he was thirteen and a half instead of eleven and a half, and in every way but size a much more grown-up man.

However, he was received on board the *Leander* as a "squeaker." He knew no one except two middies, who were as strange to everything as himself. A feeling of despair came over him when his father shook his hand and left the ship. For the first few days he must have had a fairly rough time of it, for besides knowing no one, and being entirely strange to everything, he was very small for his age, spoke broad Scotch, and was "of a rather testy disposition." He tells us, though, that he made an invariable practice of writing home cheerfully, of choosing the pleasant or amusing things to write about, and not the disagreeable ones. His first letter to his father, written after twenty-four hours' experience on board, gives no hint of unhappiness.

H.M. SHIP "LEANDER," June 12, 1802,  
COCKPIT.

"DEAR FATHER,—After you left us, I went down into the mess-room; it is a place about twenty feet long, with a table in the middle of it, and wooden seats upon which we sit. When I came down there were a great many cups and saucers upon the table. A man came in and poured hot water into the teapot. There are about fourteen of us mess at the same time. We were very merry in this dark hole, where we had only two candles.

"We come down here and sit when we like; and

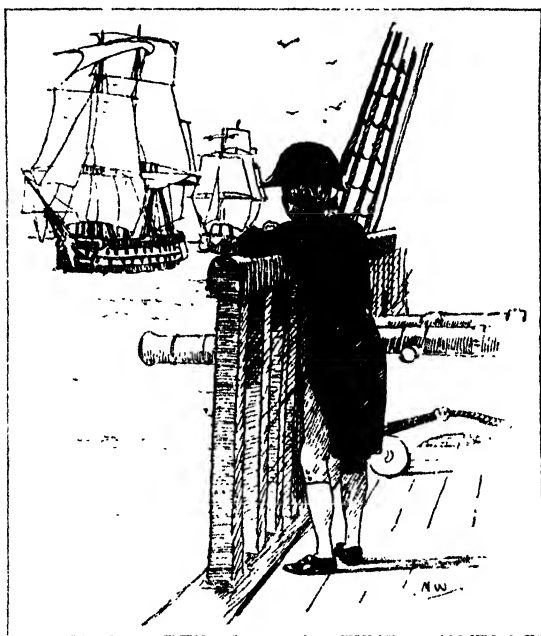
## 108 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

at other times go upon deck. At about ten o'clock we had supper upon bread and cheese, and a kind of pudding which we liked very much. Some time after this I went to a hammock which was not my own, as mine was not ready, there not being enough of clues at it, but I will have it to-night. I got in at last. It was very queer to find myself swinging about in this uncouth manner, for there was only about a foot of space between my face and the roof—so, of course, I broke my head a great many times on the different posts in the cockpit, where all the midshipmen sleep. After having got in you may be sure I did not sleep very well, when all the people were making such a noise going to bed in the dark, and the ship in such confusion. I fell asleep at last, but was always disturbed by the quartermaster coming down to awake the midshipmen who were to be on guard during the night. He comes up to their bedsides and calls them; so I, not being accustomed to it, was always awaked too. I had some sleep however, but early in the morning was again roused by the men beginning to work.

“There is a large hole which comes down from the decks all the way through to the hold, where they let down the casks. The foot of the hammock that I slept in was just at the hole, and I saw the casks all coming down close by me. I got up at half-past seven, and went into the birth (our mess room), and we were all waiting for breakfast till eight when the man who serves and brings in the dishes for the mess came down in a terrible passion, saying, that as he was boiling the kettle at the stove, the master-at-arms had thrown water upon the fire and put it out.

## THE ADVENTURES OF BASIL 109

All this was because the powder was coming on board. So we had to wait our breakfast for once. But we had a piece of bread and butter; and as we were eating it, the master-at-arms came down



"Looking at the Indiamen coming up the river"

and said that our candles were to be taken away; so we had to eat our dry meal in the dark.

"I then went upon deck, and walked about, looking at the Indiamen coming up the river, till eleven, when I and one of my companions went and asked the lieutenant if he would let us go on shore in the jolly-boat, as it was going at any rate. We intended to

## 110 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

take a walk in some of the fields. We got leave, and some more of the midshipmen went with us. There are about six men row in the boat, and we sit anywhere we like. Got on shore and ran about the park you were mentioning when in the boat. Then came back to an inn, where we had some rolls and butter and coffee to make up for the loss of our breakfast in the morning. We then took a walk to the church at Dartford, where we lounged about till we were tired—then came back through the fields to the boat, which we got into and made the ship."

The following day the ship sailed for Spithead, where she was to remain a week or two before finally setting out for Halifax. Basil wrote from Spithead :

"I am much better pleased with my situation than I suspected I would be at my first coming on board. We have in our mess four Scotchmen, six Englishmen, and two Irish, so that we make a very pleasant company down in the cockpit. We dine at twelve, and breakfast at eight in the morning. At breakfast we get tea and sea-cake; at dinner we have either beef, pork, or pudding. But when we come into harbour, or near one, there are always numbers of boats come out with all sorts of vegetables and fresh meat, which are not left long in the boat—for the people all run and buy up the soft bread and fresh provisions. . . .

"We midshipmen are upon watch every night for four hours together; we do nothing but walk the quarter-deck, if the ship is not sailing. There

## THE ADVENTURES OF BASIL 111

is always half the crew upon deck when the ship is sailing, and we and the lieutenants order them to do so and so about the ropes and sails. . . . All the decks are washed and well scrubbed every morning, which is very right, as they are often dirtied.

"There is a sort of cylinder of sail-cloth, about 2 feet in diameter, which is hung above the deck, and is continued down through the decks to the cockpit. The wind gets in at the top, and so runs down and airs the cockpit, which is a very pleasant thing down here at the bottom of the ship."

In another letter, at this time, Basil describes a fire on board, which he helped to put out, with what he considered great presence of mind :

"We were very near all being destroyed and blown up last night by an alarming fire on board. As I was standing making my hammock last night, about ten o'clock, near two others making theirs, we were alarmed by seeing a large burst of sparks come from one corner of the cockpit. Without going to see what was the matter, I ran into our birth or place where we mess, and got hold of all the pots of beer which the midshipmen were going to drink. I returned with these and threw them on the fire while others ran for water.

"When I came back I saw the purser's steward covered with fire, and rubbing it off him as fast as he could, with a pile of burning sheets and blankets lying at his feet. One of us ran up to the quarter-deck, and seizing the fire-buckets that were nearest, filled them and brought them down. We also got

## 112 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

some of the men out of their hammocks, but took great care not to awaken any of the rest, for fear of bustle and confusion.

"The sentry, as soon as he discovered the smell, went down to the captain and lieutenants, who immediately came to the cockpit and whispered out 'Silence!' They then got more buckets of water, and quenched the flames, which as they thought were only in the purser's steward's cabin. But one of the men opened the door of the steward's storeroom, and saw a great deal of fire lying on the floor. Water, of course, was applied, and it was also quenched; the storeroom was then well flooded.

"The captain ordered the purser's steward to be put in irons directly, as well as his boy, who had struck the light up in his cabin. The captain next went with the master-at-arms into the powder-magazine, which was close to the purser's steward's cabin, and found the bulk-head or partition half-burnt through by the fire in the Cabin!

"All this mischief was occasioned by sticking a naked light upon the beam above the cabin, from whence it had fallen down and set fire to the sheets. The steward in trying to smother it with more, had set fire to the whole bundle, which he then flung in a mass into the storeroom. There was a watch kept all night near the spot. Nobody has been hurt.

"I am very sorry for the purser's steward, for he was a very good-natured and obliging man, and much liked by all of us. He gave us plums, &c., when we asked them from him. He is broke, I fear."

This incident brought Basil into notice; and the following day, to his great satisfaction, he was ordered by the first lieutenant to go in the jolly-boat, with a message to a ship lying near, at Spit-head. Basil asked how he should know the ship in question.

"Oh," said the lieutenant, looking over the gang-way hammocks, "that ship with the top-gallant-masts struck."

Basil had not the remotest idea what the term "top-gallant-masts struck" might mean. He steered a vague and zigzag course among the fleet for some time, till the strokesman of the jolly-boat laid his oar across, touched his hat, and said, "Which ship are we going to, sir?"

Basil answered, "The one with the top-gallant-masts struck."

"Oh, sir," said the fellow, smiling, "we have passed her some time—there she lies," pointing astern.

When the message had been delivered, and the *Leander* was again reached, Basil was greeted by the lieutenant in the curtest manner:

"Where the deuce have you been, youngster, all this time? And what possessed you to go cruising about amongst the whole fleet at such a rate?"

"I hope I shall learn to do better, sir," stammered Basil.

"There is much room for improvement, I am sure," cried the lieutenant.

Basil felt much mortified by this reproach, especially as he had been thinking himself rather a brilliant fellow since his behaviour during the fire the night before. But he saw there was nothing for



## 114 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

it but to learn as soon as possible how to steer, and what was meant by "striking top-gallant-masts."

On the 11th of July the *Leander* sailed for Halifax. A few days after they lost sight of land the captain called all the youngsters into his cabin and told them that they were not of the smallest use on board the ship, if anything, they were rather in the way, but that he had no objection to their learning their business if they cared to. He therefore gave them their choice of keeping watch or not, but he warned them that if they decided to do their duty in this way they would be made to perform it in earnest. Out of a dozen middies only Basil and one other decided to keep watch. Most of them did not at all relish the idea of spending four hours of the night in pacing up and down the deck in addition to their tasks during the day. Basil, however, decided that there would be a certain amount of distinction due to a mid. who in the first instance resolved to do his business properly, and had afterwards perseverance enough to make good his pledge. On the whole he found it rather an agreeable duty than otherwise, partly because it made him sleep so well afterwards, and partly because it helped to assure him that what he was about was not play but real earnest.

In large ships like the *Leander* (a 50-gun ship), where there were more midshipmen on board than were actually required, they were divided into three watches, each stationed on different parts of the deck. The mate of the watch with two or three youngsters walked on the quarter-deck (always on the lee-side); another midshipman had the honour of

being posted on the forecastle; while a third walked on the poop—the small deck above the aftmost part of the quarter-deck. Basil was soon promoted from the quarter-deck to the charge of the poop. It was a positive order that no clothes should be hung up to dry except on the clothes' lines or in the weather rigging. To take care that this order was obeyed was the business of the poop middy, because from his high position he could see almost all over the ship; but it was not always an easy duty. The first lieutenant was most particular on this subject, and whenever he detected a shirt or pair of trousers that had escaped the middy's notice, the youngster was sure to catch it. Basil had a horror of "being wigged," as the middies called it, and he also hoped that if he performed his duties conscientiously he might in due time be advanced to the dignity of forecastle midshipman. Therefore, as soon as he was put in command of the poop, he waged fierce war against the wet shirts of the sailors, and especially the well-pipe-clayed trousers of the marines that were frequently hung up on the forbidden ropes. He found it no easy task to exact obedience. On one occasion, having given warning, as he declared, for the hundred and fiftieth time, he pulled out his knife and cut the stops which tied the shirt to the jolly-boat's tackle-fall, and then, in a rage, proceeded to throw the garment overboard. Just as the sun peeped above the horizon the first lieutenant made his appearance. He cast his eyes towards the poop, and Basil chuckled to himself, knowing that for once it was really clear of shirts.

The decks, however, were hardly swabbed before

## 116 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

he saw a mizen-top-man address himself to the first lieutenant, evidently to lodge a complaint. The next minute Basil was called down and questioned. He admitted having thrown the lad's shirt overboard, and was desired to recompense him for the loss by paying him the value in money; while the sailor was in turn punished for disobedience to orders. But the middy got due credit for his keenness. It was the lieutenant's practice to give every evening to the mate of the watch his orders for the night in writing. That night the order-paper contained simply these words :

"Mr. Hall is the only gentleman who attends to his duty on the poop."

The most unpleasant part of keeping watch, Basil found, was being rudely awakened out of his sleep at midnight when his turn came to take the middle watch. To turn out of a warm hammock and hurry on deck on a cold rainy night and tramp up and down for hours, was at times a real trial. However, it had to be got through somehow, if only to escape the penalties which his companions were apt to inflict on a middy who dawdled or fell asleep again after he was called, and so kept the previous watch on deck beyond his time.

The commonest form of punishment for this was called "cutting down." The hammock consisted of a piece of canvas 5 feet long by 2 feet wide, suspended to the deck overhead by means of two sets of small lines, called clews, made fast to grommets, or rings of rope, which were attached by a lanyard to the battens stretching along the beams. In this sacking was placed a small mattress, two blankets, and a pillow.

Each hammock occupied less than a foot and a half in width, and they were hung so close as to touch each other.

The mildest form of cutting down was to take a knife and cut the foremost lanyard or suspending cord. The end of the hammock instantly fell, and the sleepy youth was pitched out feet foremost. The other plan was neither so gentle nor so safe; it was to cut the cord at the bottom end, and so bring the sleeper's head down with a bang, while his heels were jerked into the air. The third plan, of cutting both ends at once, probably landed the unfortunate middy on the edge of a chest placed ready to receive him, or on the bends of a cable coiled under him. In either case it was a nasty bump. Sometimes before cutting the ropes the tormentors would tie a cord round the middle of the hammock and fasten it to the beams overhead, so that when the two end ropes were cut the unfortunate victim remained suspended by the "belly-band," as they called it, in mid-air. These were among the mildest tricks that were invented for really incorrigible snoozers who continually refused to relieve the deck in proper time.

## 2. A TAILOR AND SOME WHALERS

The *Leander* reached Halifax, in Nova Scotia, after a passage of about six weeks. A modern battleship would take perhaps eight days to perform this voyage. Basil was born a traveller as well as a sailor. He took great delight in the new countries he visited, and quickly made friends, and got into society on shore. He found his uniform a good pass-

## 118 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

port anywhere, and took every advantage of his opportunities.

But even ashore the midshipmen could not refrain from playing practical jokes whenever they got the chance. There was a certain tailor at Halifax who was much provoked by some of the middies refusing to pay his very long bills, and who said in a rage, in the cockpit, before them all, that having tried his son in half a dozen professions without any chance of success, he was resolved, as a last resource, to make a midshipman of him.

As soon as the tailor had left the ship the young officers resolved to punish him for his sarcastic speech. They had noticed that he took especial pride in the queue, or pigtail of hair which he wore after the fashion of the time, but in a very exaggerated form, reaching half-way down his back. The middies held a secret council, and resolved that this tail should forthwith be docked. The tailor was formally invited to dinner on board, and given so much grog that he was soon under the table. In this helpless state he was lifted and placed across the bends of a small cable, and on this rather uncomfortable couch he at length fell asleep. The middies, then, with a lump of pitch, glued his beautiful tail that he was so proud of to the strands of the cable.

In the morning, when he was waked by the firing of the daylight gun immediately overhead, he found himself quite unable to get up, as he was firmly fastened down by the hair. After tugging at it with his hands for a minute or two he roared out for help. One of the middies had the brilliant idea of making the tailor complete the job himself, and, handing him

a knife, he urged him to make haste as "the devil had got him by the tail." The wretched man was so thoroughly terrified that he seized the knife and cut away lustily without in the least realising what he was doing. When he got up and turned round he beheld with dismay the cherished locks which had been his pride sticking to the cable. The thought of returning home tailless to his wife was too much for him, and he exclaimed woefully to his tormentors, standing round, "Oh Lord! oh Lord! I am a lost man to my Becky!"

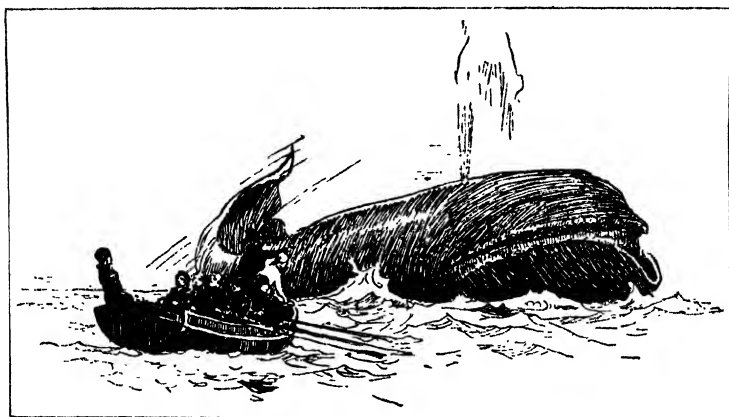
This expression of being "a lost man to one's Becky" became a byword in the ship for many years afterwards, whenever anyone got into a scrape and came out of it with loss.

In December the *Leander* left Halifax for the Bermudas. These consist of a hundred little islands or more, clustered round two or three large ones. A great deal of cedar was grown on the islands, not the cedar of Lebanon, but the kind used for making pencils, and there were also orange and lemon trees in great abundance. The midshipmen were enchanted to see so many oranges growing wild, but it was a great disappointment to find, when they had climbed up and gathered them, in hopes of a feast, that they were all of the bitter kind used for making marmalade, and good for nothing else.

On the northern side of these islands there are extensive coral reefs all lying hidden just below the surface of the water. These coral reefs are very dangerous to ships, and also, occasionally, it would appear, to whales.

## 120 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

One morning a monstrous whale was seen playing about the *Leander*, far within the belt of reefs. It was a puzzle to know how he had got through the rocks, but there he was, in fairly deep water, surrounded by reefs in which he could find no opening for escape. All hands crowded into the rigging to watch him floundering about, and then some rash person suggested paying him a visit in one of the



"The whale looked very big and formidable as they approached him"

ship's boats. Several of the middies went off in a cutter, with no other weapons than the ordinary boat-hooks, and not in the least knowing what they were going to do. The whale looked very big and formidable as they approached him, and some regular plan of attack seemed necessary. Everyone on the ship was now watching, and the headstrong youngsters decided unanimously to run right on board of the whale, and take their chance. The long line of his back was just showing above water.

They rowed forward, and then suddenly found themselves spinning round and round in a great whirlpool of water, while the whale was no longer to be seen. Disturbed probably by their approach he had slipped down out of sight. This caused much amusement to the spectators on board.

Then, while the middies were resting on their oars, and wondering what to do next, they saw a most extraordinary sight. Suddenly, without the least warning, the whale leapt twenty feet out of the water, much as a trout or salmon springs out of a river, and fell back on his side on the sea with a thundering crash. Had he leapt a moment sooner he would have fallen plump on the boat and smashed it to atoms. As it was, the waves caused by the fall spread half over the anchorage, and the boat rocked dangerously for some time.

The middies, however, were by no means content to let the whale go in peace. Their curiosity was aroused, and they started off to poke him up again, hoping to see him make another leap. They chased him about for a long time in vain, and finally lost sight of him altogether among the reefs. They then found themselves almost out of sight of the island. The sky had become overcast, and a smart south-west breeze had risen. They had a very stiff row back to the anchorage, where they arrived quite exhausted just before nightfall.

### 3. GOOD DOG SHAKINGS

During these long months when the ship was lying idle in the Bermudas, owing to the Peace of



## 122 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

Amiens, the chief amusement among all classes of the *Leander's* officers was shooting. Daily excursions were made among the cedar groves and orange plantations. The senior officers had guns and suitable ammunition, "and several of them had fine well-bred pointers brought from England. The midshipmen had to content themselves with knocking down the red and blue birds with ships' pistols, charged with rough home-made shot, cut up out of his Majesty's musket-bullets. But they were determined not to be out-done in the matter of a dog. Some sort of animal of their own, no matter of what breed, they must have. Here, in his own words, is Basil's story of the unfortunate dog they succeeded in getting hold of:

"I forget how we procured the strange-looking beast whose services we contrived to engage; but having once obtained him we were not slow in giving him our best affections. It is true he was as ugly as anything could possibly be. His colour was a dirty reddish yellow; and while a part of his hair twisted itself up in curls, a part hung down quite straight almost to the ground. He was utterly useless for all the purposes of real sport, but quite good enough to furnish the mids. with plenty of fun when they went on shore—in chasing pigs, barking at old white-headed negresses, and other amusements suited to the exalted taste and habits of the rising generation of officers.

"People will differ as to the merits of dogs; but we had no doubts as to the great superiority of ours over all the others on board, though the name we

gave him certainly implied no such confidence on our part. After a full deliberation, it was decided to call him Shakings. Now, it must be explained that shakings is the name given to small fragments of rope yarns, odds and ends of cordage, bits of oakum, old lanyards—in short, to any kind of refuse arising out of the wear and tear of the ropes. This odd name was perhaps bestowed on our beautiful favourite in consequence of his colour not being very dissimilar to that of well-tarred Russia hemp; while the resemblance was increased by many a dab of pitch, which his rough coat imbibed from the seams between the planks of the deck, in the hot weather.

“If old Shakings was no great beauty, he was, at least, the most companionable of dogs; and though he dearly loved the midshipmen, and was dearly beloved by them in return, he had enough of the animal in his composition to take a still higher pleasure in the society of his own kind. So that, when the high-bred, showy pointers belonging to the officers came on board, after a shooting excursion, Mr. Shakings lost no time in applying to them for the news. The pointers, who liked this sort of familiarity very well, gave poor Shakings all sorts of encouragement. Not so their masters—they could not bear to see such an abominable cur as they called our favourite, at once so cursedly dirty and so utterly useless, mixing with their sleek and well-kept animals. At first their dislike was confined to such insulting expressions as these; then it came to an occasional kick, or a knock on the nose with the butt-end of a fowling-piece; and lastly to a sound cut with the hunting-whip.

"Shakings, who instinctively knew his place, took all this, like a sensible fellow, in good part; while the mids., when out of hearing of the higher powers, uttered curses both loud and deep against the tyranny and oppression exercised against an animal which, in their fond fancy, was declared to be worth all the dogs in the ward-room put together. They were little prepared, however, for the stroke which soon fell upon them, perhaps in consequence of these very murmurs. To their great horror and indignation, one of the lieutenants, provoked at some liberty which Master Shakings had taken with his newly-polished boot, called out, one morning:

"Man the jolly-boat, and land that infernal, dirty, ugly beast of a dog belonging to the young gentlemen!"

"Where shall I take him to, sir?" asked the strokesman of the boat.

"Oh, anywhere; pull to the nearest part of the shore and pitch him out on the rocks. He'll shift for himself, I have no doubt.' So off went poor, dear Shakings!

"If a stranger had come into the midshipmen's birth at that moment, he might have thought his Majesty's naval service was about to be broken up. All allegiance, discipline, or subordination seemed utterly cancelled by this horrible act. Many were the execrations hurled upwards at the offending 'knobs' who, we thought, were combining to make our lives miserable. Some of our party voted for writing a letter of remonstrance to the Admiral against this unheard-of outrage; and one youth

swore deeply that he would leave the Service, unless justice were obtained. But as he had been known to swear the same thing half a dozen times every day since he joined the ship, no great notice was taken of his pledge. Another declared, upon his word of honour, that such an act was enough to make a man turn Turk, and fly his country! At last it was decided by general agreement, that we should not do a bit of duty, or even stir from our seats, till we obtained redress for our grievances. However, while we were in the very act of vowing mutiny and disobedience, the hands were turned up to 'furl sails,' upon which the whole party, totally forgetting their magnanimous resolution, scudded up the ladders, and jumped into their stations with more than usual alacrity, wisely thinking that the moment for actual revolt had not yet arrived.

"A better scheme than throwing up the Service, or writing to the Admiral, or turning Mussulman, was afterwards concocted. The midshipmen who went on shore in the next boat easily got hold of poor Shakings, who was howling on the steps of the watering-place. In order to conceal him, he was stuffed neck and crop into the captain's cloak-bag, brought safely on board, and restored once more to the bosom of his friends.

"In spite of all we could do, however, to keep Master Shakings below, he presently found his way to the quarter-deck, to receive the congratulations of the other dogs. There he was soon detected by the higher powers, and very shortly afterwards tumbled over the gangway, and again tossed on the beach. Upon this occasion he was honoured by the presence

of one of his own masters, a middy, sent upon this express duty, who was specially desired to land the brute and not to bring him on board again. Of course this particular youngster did not bring the dog off; but before night, somehow or other, old Shakings was snoring away in grand chorus with his more fashionable friends the pointers; and dreaming no evil, before the door of the very officer's cabin whose beautifully-polished boots he had brushed by so rudely in the morning—an offence that had led to his banishment.

“The second return of our dog was too much. The whole posse of us were sent for on the quarter-deck, and in very distinct terms positively ordered not to bring Shakings on board again. These injunctions having been given, the wretched victim, as we termed him, of oppression, was once more landed amongst the cedar groves. This time he remained a full week on shore; but how or when he found his way off again, no one ever knew; at least no one chose to divulge. Never was there anything like the mutual joy felt by Shakings and his two dozen masters. He careered about the ship, barked and yelled with delight, and, in his raptures, actually leaped, with his dirty feet, on the milk-white duck trousers of the disgusted officers, who heartily wished him at the bottom of the anchorage. Thus the poor beast unwittingly contributed to accelerate his hapless fate by this ill-timed show of confidence in those who were plotting his ruin. If he had kept his paws to himself, and stayed quietly in the dark recesses of the cockpit, wings, cable-tiers, and other wild regions, the secrets of which were known only to

the inhabitants of our submarine world, all might have been well.

"We had a grand jollification on the night of Shakings' restoration; and his health was in the very act of being drunk, with three times three, when the officer of the watch, hearing an uproar below, the sounds of which were conveyed distinctly up the wind-sail, sent down to put our lights out; and we were forced to march off, growling, to our hammocks.

"Next day, to our surprise and horror, old Shakings was not to be seen or heard of. We searched everywhere, interrogated the coxswains of all the boats, and cross-questioned the marines who had been sentries during the night on the fore-castle, gangways, and poop; but all in vain! no trace of Shakings could be found.

## 4. PIGS IN MOURNING

"At length the idea began to gain ground amongst us that the poor beast had been put an end to by some diabolical means; and our ire mounted accordingly. This suspicion seemed the more natural, as the officers said not a word about the matter, nor even asked us what we had done with our dog. While we were in this state of excitement and distraction for our loss, one of the midshipmen, who had some drollery in his composition, gave a new turn to the expression of our thoughts.

"This gentleman, who was more than twice as old as most of us, say about thirty, had won the affections of the whole of our class by the gentleness

of his manners, and the generous part he always took on our side. He bore amongst us the pet name of Daddy; and certainly he was like a father to those of us who, like myself, were quite adrift in the ship, without anyone to look after them. He was a man of talents and classical education; but he had entered into the Navy far too late in life ever to take to it cordially. His habits, indeed, had become so rigid that they could never be made to bend to the mortifying kind of discipline which it appears essential every officer should run through, but which only the young and light-hearted can brook. Our worthy friend, accordingly, with all his abilities, taste and acquirements, never seemed at home on board-ship; and unless a man can reach this point of liking for the sea, he is better on shore. At all events, old Daddy cared more about his books than about the blocks, and delighted much more in giving us assistance in our literary pursuits, and trying to teach us how to be useful, than in rendering himself a proficient in those professional mysteries which he never hoped to practise in earnest himself.

“What this very interesting person’s early history was we never could find out; nor why he entered the Navy; nor how it came that a man of his powers and accomplishments should have been kept back so long. Indeed the youngsters never inquired too closely into these matters, being quite contented to have the advantage of his protection against the oppression of some of the other oldsters who occasionally bullied them. Upon all occasions of difficulty we were in the habit of clustering round him, to tell our grievances, great and small, with the certainty

of always finding in him that great desideratum in calamity—a patient and friendly listener.

“It will easily be supposed that our kind Daddy took more than usual interest in this affair of Shakings, and that he was applied to by us at every stage of the transaction. He was sadly perplexed, of course, when the dog was finally missing; and for some days could give us no comfort, nor suggest any mode of revenge that was not too dangerous for his young friends to put in practice. He prudently observed, that as we had no certainty to go upon, it would be foolish to get ourselves into a serious scrape for nothing at all.

“‘There can be no harm, however,’ he continued, in his dry and slightly sarcastic way, which all who knew him well will recollect as well as if they saw him now, drawing his hand slowly across his mouth and chin, ‘there can be no harm, my boys, in putting the other dogs in mourning for their dear departed friend Shakings; for whatever is come of him, he is lost to them as well as to us, and his memory ought to be duly respected.’

“This hint was no sooner given than a cry was raised for crape, and every chest and bag ransacked, to procure badges of mourning. The pointers were speedily rigged up with a large bunch of black, tied in a handsome bow upon the left leg of each just above the knee. The joke took immediately. The officers could not help laughing; for though we considered them little better than fiends at that moment of excitement, they were, in fact, except in this instance, the best natured and most indulgent men I remember to have sailed with. They, of course,



## 130 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

ordered the crape to be instantly cut off from the dogs' legs; and one of the officers remarked to us, seriously, that as we had now had our piece of fun out, there were to be no more such tricks.

"Off we scampered to consult old Daddy what was to be done next, as we had been positively ordered not to meddle any more with the dogs.

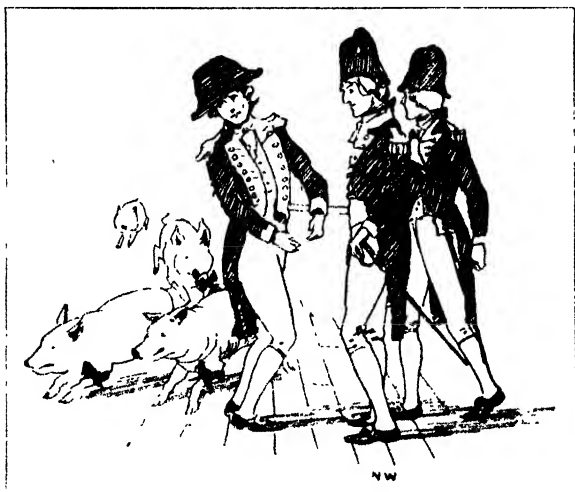
"'Put the pigs in mourning,' he said.

"All our crape was expended by this time; but this want was soon supplied by men whose trade it is to discover resources in difficulty. With a generous devotion to the cause of public spirit, one of these juvenile mutineers pulled off his black handkerchief, and tearing it in pieces gave a portion to each of the circle, and away we all started to put into practice this new suggestion of our director-general of mischief.

"The row which ensued in the pig-sty was prodigious—for, in those days, hogs were allowed a place on board a man-of-war, a custom most wisely abandoned of late years, since nothing can be more out of character with any ship than such nuisances. As these matters of taste and cleanliness were nothing to us, we did not intermit our noisy labour till everyone of the grunTERS had his armlet of such crape as we had been able to muster. We then watched our opportunity, so as to let out the whole herd of swine on the main-deck just at a moment when a group of the officers were standing on the fore-part of the quarter-deck. Of course the liberated pigs, delighted with their freedom, passed in review under the very nose of our superiors, each with his mourning knot displayed, grunting or squealing along, as if it was their

## THE ADVENTURES OF BASIL 131

express object to attract attention to their domestic sorrow for the loss of Shakings. The officers were excessively provoked, as they could not help seeing that all this was affording entertainment, at their expense, to the whole crew, for, although the men took no part in this touch of insubordination, they were ready enough, in those idle times of weary,



“Passed in review under the very nose of our superiors”

weary peace, to catch at any species of distraction or devilry, no matter what, to compensate for the loss of their wonted occupation of pommeling their enemies.

“The matter, therefore, necessarily became rather serious; and the whole gang of us being sent for on the quarter-deck we were ranged in a line, each with his toes at the edge of a plank, according to the

orthodox fashion of these gregarious scoldings, technically called 'toe-the-line matches.' We were then given to understand that our proceedings were impertinent, and, after the orders we had received, highly offensive. It was with much difficulty that either party could keep their countenances during this official lecture, for while it was going on, the sailors were endeavouring, by the direction of the officers, to remove the bits of silk from the legs of the pigs. If, however, it be difficult—as most difficult we found it—to put a hog into mourning, it is a job ten times more troublesome to take him out again. Such at least is the fair inference from these two experiments—the only ones perhaps on record; for it cost half the morning to undo what we had effected in less than an hour—to say nothing of the unceasing and outrageous uproar which took place along the decks, especially under the guns, and even under the coppers, forward in the gallery, where two or three of the youngest pigs had wedged themselves, apparently resolved to die rather than submit to the degradation of being deprived of their sable bandages.

"All this was very creditable to the memory of poor Shakings; but, in the course of the day, the real secret of this extraordinary difficulty of taking a pig out of mourning was discovered. Two of the mids. were detected in the very act of tying on a bit of black bunting to the leg of a sow, from which the seamen declared they had already cut off crape and silk enough to have made her a complete suit of black.

"As soon as these fresh offences were reported, the whole party of us were ordered to the mast-head as





punishment. Some were sent to sit on the top-mast cross-trees, some on the top-gallant yard-arms, and one small gentleman being perched at the jib-boom end, was very properly balanced abaft by another little culprit at the extremity of the gaff. In this predicament we were 'hung out to dry' for six or eight hours, as old Daddy remarked to us with a grin when we were called down as the night fell.

"Our persevering friend, being rather provoked at the punishment of his young flock, now set to work to discover the real fate of Shakings. It soon occurred to him that if the dog had really been made away with, as he shrewdly suspected, the butcher, in all probability, must have had a hand in his murder; accordingly, he sent for the man in the evening, when the following dialogue took place:

"'Well, butcher, will you have a glass of grog to-night?'

"'Thank you, sir, thank you. Here's your honour's health!' said the other, after smoothing down his hair, and pulling an immense quid of tobacco out of his mouth.

"Old Daddy observed the peculiar relish with which the butcher took his glass; and mixing another, a good deal more potent, placed it before the fellow, and continued the conversation in these words:

"'I tell you what it is, Mr. Butcher, you are as humane a man as any in the ship, I dare say; but if required, you know well that you must do your duty, whether it is upon sheep or hogs?'

"'Surely, sir.'

"'Or upon dogs either?' suddenly asked the inquisitor.

## 134 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

“‘I don’t know about that,’ stammered the butcher, quite taken by surprise, and thrown all aback.

“‘Well—well!’ said Daddy, ‘here’s another glass for you—a stiff north-wester. Come! tell us all about it now. How did you get rid of the dog?—of Shakings, I mean?’

“‘Why, sir,’ said the peaching rogue, ‘I put him in a bag—a bread bag, sir.’

“‘Well! what then?’

“‘I tied up the mouth, and put him overboard—out of the midship lower-deck port, sir.’

“‘Yes; but he would not sink?’ said Daddy.

“‘Oh, sir,’ cried the butcher, now entering fully into the merciless spirit of his trade, ‘I put a four-and-twenty-pound shot into the bag along with Shakings.’

“‘Did you? Then, Master Butcher, all I can say is, you are as precious a rascal as ever went about unhanged. There, drink your grog and be off with you!’

“Next morning, when the officers were assembled at breakfast in the ward-room, the door of the captain of marines’ cabin was suddenly opened, and that officer, half-shaved, and laughing through a collar of soap-suds, stalked out with a paper in his hand.

“‘Here,’ he exclaimed, ‘is a copy of verses, which I found just now in my basin. I can’t tell how they got there, nor what they are about; but you shall judge.’

“So he read the two following stanzas of doggerel:

“‘When the Northern Confed’racy threatened our shores,  
And roused Albion’s Lion, reclining to sleep,  
Preservation was taken of all the King’s Stores,  
Nor so much as a *Rope Yarn* was launched in the deep.

## THE ADVENTURES OF BASIL 135

But now it is Peace, other hopes are in view,  
And all active service is light as a feather,  
The Stores may be d——d, and humanity too,  
For Shakings and *Shot* are thrown o'er board together.'

"I need hardly say in what quarter of the ship this biting morsel of cockpit satire was concocted, nor indeed who wrote it, for there was no one but our good Daddy who was equal to such a flight. About midnight an urchin—who shall be nameless—was thrust out of one of the after-ports of the lower deck, from which he clambered up to the marine officer's port, and the sash happening to have been lowered down on the gun, the epigram, copied by another of the youngsters, was pitched into the soldier's basin.

"The wisest thing would have been for the officers to have said nothing about the matter, and let it blow by. But angry people are seldom judicious—so they made a formal complaint to the captain, who, to do him justice, was not a little puzzled to know how to settle the affair. The reputed author, however, was called up, and the captain said to him:

"'Pray, sir, are you the writer of these lines?'

"'I am, sir,' he replied, after a little consideration.

"'Then, all I can say is,' remarked the captain, 'they are clever enough in their way—but take my advice, and write no more such verses.'

"So the affair ended. The satirist took our captain's hint in good part, and confined his pen to topics below the surface of the water."



# ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN

## 1. A BOY IN TWO GREAT BATTLES

I AM now going to tell you some of the adventures of another sailor, John Franklin. He began, like Charles, by seeing much active service as a midshipman, but he ended, like Basil, by becoming an explorer. It was clear from the very first that his line in life, the work he most wished to do, was not war, but travelling and discovery. He was a good seaman, and was in the thick of two great battles, but he did not really care for the navy as a fighting service; his ambition was to go all about the world and find out unknown parts of it. As long as he lived he never gave up this desire, and at last, even when he was nearly sixty years old, he was ready and eager to sail for the Arctic regions and search for the North-West passage. And this he did at the cost of his life, partly from love of adventure and partly from love of his country; for he knew how much honour would be won for England by such a discovery. In the result he was even more successful than he could have hoped, for he left behind him a name which has inspired many great explorers since. In our own time and country we have seen Younghusband, and Shackleton, and Wilson and Oates and Scott, men who have followed Franklin in discovering

for us not only new lands, but new possibilities of daring and foresight and unselfishness. So now for Franklin's story.

He was born at Spilsby in Lincolnshire, on the 15th of April 1786. He had four brothers and four sisters older than himself, and seems to have been rather petted and spoiled as a little boy, for he was then very delicate and weakly, like many small boys who have grown up later to become famous men. But three more little sisters were born after him, so he did not long remain the baby of the family. He was good-natured and affectionate, but very untidy; and this was a continual distress to the rest of the family, who were noted for their neatness and orderliness. There was one terrible day when the whip that had always hung unused on the staircase landing had to be taken down and laid across John's shoulders.

When he was ten he was sent to school, first at St. Ives and then to the Grammar School at Louth. He had never yet seen the sea, and one holiday he and a friend decided to make for the coast, which was only ten miles away from Louth. We are not told what they did when they got there, but when John returned he had firmly made up his mind to be a sailor. His father would not hear of such a thing, and declared that he would rather follow his son to the grave than to the sea. However, when he found at the end of two years that John had not changed his mind, he decided to send him for a cruise on board a merchant vessel trading between Hull and Lisbon. This was a much rougher experience for a boy then than it would be nowadays, and he

## 138 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

probably thought that a taste of the realities of life at sea would cure John of all desire to be a sailor. But John returned from this voyage more determined than ever, and Mr. Franklin, like a wise man, gave way. A berth was obtained for John, who was now fourteen years old, as a first class volunteer on board H.M.S. *Polyphemus*, and in the autumn of 1800 his brother Thomas took him up to London to buy him his outfit and see him off.

But the *Polyphemus* was not at home: she was engaged in "demonstrating" off Elsinore, and Thomas soon became tired of "doing nothing, yet continually running after this nasty cloaths-buying business," and he suggested putting John to school till the *Polyphemus* should return to Yarmouth Roads. However, he seems to have had the good sense to admire his young brother's dirk and cocked hat which, he wrote, "are certainly very formidable, and are among the most attractive parts of his dress."

John was left with a friend in London till the end of October, when the *Polyphemus* arrived in port. He was then sent off alone, as his brother had refused to wait with him, by coach to Yarmouth, with his seat paid and ten pounds in his pocket.

In the following March he writes to his parents to tell them that the *Polyphemus* is under sailing orders for the Baltic. "It is thought," says he, "we are going to Elsinour to attempt to take the castle, but some think we cannot succeed. I think they will turn their tale when they consider we have thirty-five sail of the line, exclusive of bombs, frigates and sloops, and on a moderate consideration there will be one thousand double-shotted guns to be fired as a

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 139

salute to poor Elsineur castle at first sight." He goes on to beg his father to get him transferred, if the *Polyphemus* comes back in time from the Baltic, to the *Investigator*, a vessel that was preparing to



"The good sense to admire his young brother's dink"

survey the Australasian coast under Captain Matthew Flinders. This shows that John's mind already turned to exploring rather than to ordinary naval life. He ends his letter with this postscript: "Remember me to dear Henrietta (his favourite sister),

## 140 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

and tell her when I get a ship she shall be my house-keeper. Also to Isabella."

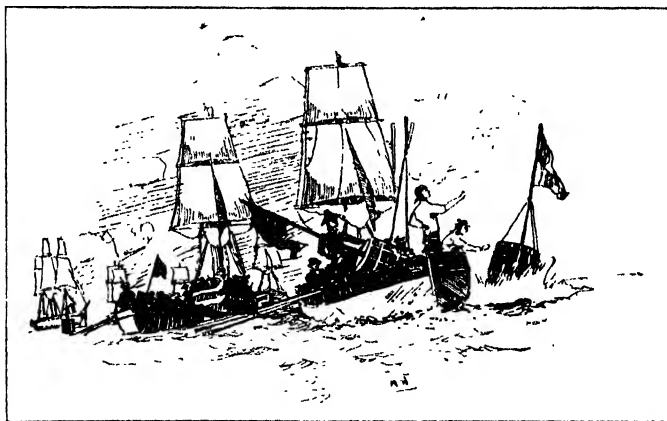
It was not, of course, to take the Castle of Elsinore that the English fleet was going to the Baltic. Their real object was to demand that the Danes should give up their practice of allowing contraband of war to be carried in their ships. They professed to be neutral, but as they carried French stores and sent men-of-war with their convoys to prevent English officers from searching them, they were really lending Buonaparte their navy as well as their merchant shipping. We did not want to fight the Danes, and we were not at war with them; but that was no reason why we should allow their ships to be used by our great enemy, so we invited them to give up this "Armed Neutrality" before any mischief was done. They refused, and got a beating, which they well deserved; for by helping Buonaparte they would have been doing their best to destroy a friendly country.

The English fleet sailed from Yarmouth on 12th March 1801, under Sir Hyde Parker, with Lord Nelson as his Second in Command. They arrived off Zealand on the 27th, and on the 30th they entered the Sound in order of battle; Lord Nelson's division, in which was the *Polyphemus*, led the van. The Castle of Cronenburg, and the batteries along the shore, fired at them "in one uninterrupted blaze" during the passage, but the crews only laughed, for no one was hit.

At midday, directly the fleet was anchored, the reconnoitring was begun; and if John thought himself in an ugly place he had every reason to

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 141

do so. The Danish line of defence in front of Copenhagen was nearly four miles long; it consisted of ships, hulks, pontoons and floating batteries, and they could bring at least 800 guns to bear upon an approaching enemy. The Danes themselves did not believe that a fleet of any size ever could approach, for the channel was an extremely dangerous one, and they had taken care to move all the buoys.



“And sent out their boats to place fresh buoys”

But next day Lord Nelson's division moved to within two leagues of the town and sent out their boats to place fresh buoys. In the night Captain Hardy even ventured as far as the first ship of the enemy, sounding silently with a long pole instead of the lead. Nelson was in the highest spirits, and drank to “a leading wind.”

The wind came in the morning, and the fleet weighed before ten o'clock. The *Edgar* led into

the channel, and got safely into position; but the *Agamemnon* immediately grounded on a shoal. The *Polyphemus* was ordered to take her place, with the *Isis* next astern of her. Then came the *Bellona* and the *Russell*; they both ran aground like the *Agamemnon*, but they were just within range, and fired with much spirit at everything they could reach. The remaining six ships of the line got into action without any mishap, and by half-past eleven both sides had settled down to their work. The distance between the two lines was about a cable's length—200 to 240 yards—and the English gunners grumbled that being unable to close made the job unnecessarily long. They liked to fight muzzle to muzzle, and Lord Nelson himself was most anxious to get nearer, but the Masters were afraid of shoaling their water. So there they lay for over four hours, sheer hammer and tongs without moving; 700 English guns against 800 Danish.

The *Polyphemus* had anchored abreast of the first two ships in the enemy's line, the *Provestein* and the *Vagriën*. Except the three stranded ships, the whole of Nelson's division lay ahead of her, in a dense cloud of smoke; and far beyond them to leeward was the Commander-in-Chief's squadron, outside the north end of the channel, with wind and tide against them. The *Polyphemus* therefore saw nothing of Sir Hyde Parker's famous signal to Nelson, to "discontinue the engagement." Everyone knows now why that signal was made; the Admiral thought that as there was no sign of the Danes weakening after two hours' firing, the attack must be a failure. His ships could

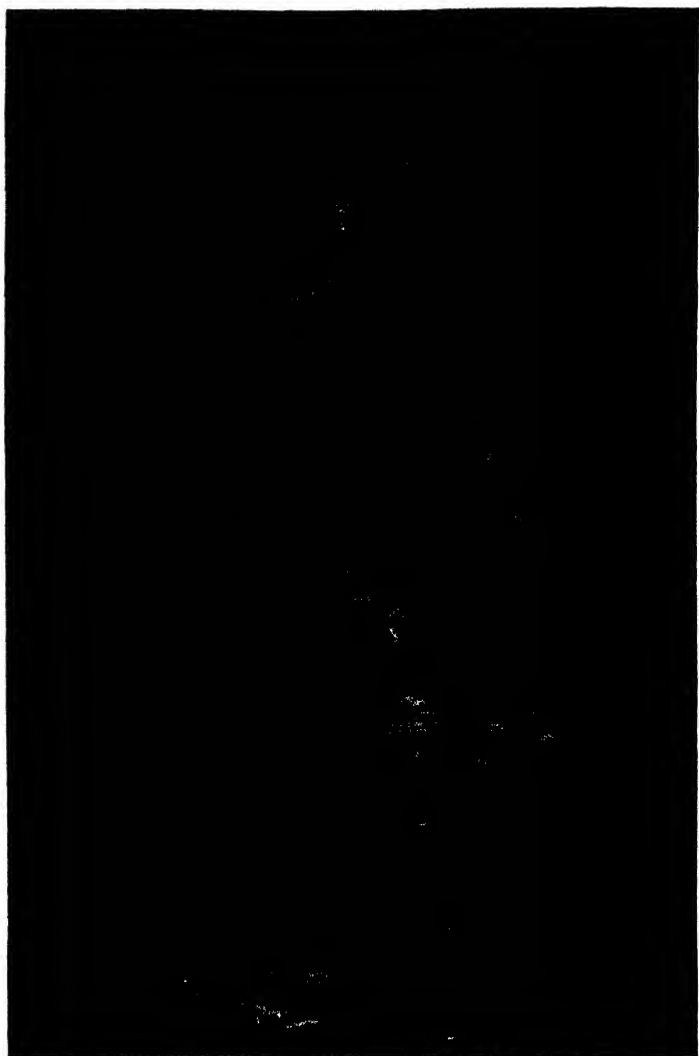
not get up to help Nelson, so he determined to save him from the shame of defeat by ordering him to retire. This was a great mistake, for it might have shaken the nerve of the fleet at the supreme moment. But Nelson's nerve was never shaken. A roundshot had just splintered the mainmast near him; he smiled and said, "Warm work, but mark you, I would not be elsewhere for thousands": and now when his kind Commander-in-Chief tried to let him down easy, he simply made a joke of it—an immortal joke. "Leave off action!" he said; "Now damn me if I do." Then he said to his flag captain: "You know, Foley, I have only one eye; I have a right to be blind sometimes"—and putting the glass to his blind eye he remarked, "I really do not see the signal." So the action went on. About 2 P.M. the greater part of the Danish line had ceased fire; at 2.45 the crews of the *Provestein* and *Vagriën* were seen escaping to the shore, and the *Polyphemus* took possession of both ships. By 3 the *Ramillies* and *Defence*, two ships of Sir Hyde Parker's division, had succeeded in getting within range, whereupon the great *Trekroner* battery, the only one that had not struck, was ordered to cease firing, and a flag of truce was hoisted. The rest of the batteries had all been destroyed, and all the ships taken except the *Dannebrog*, which was drifting in flames. The total loss of Nelson's squadron was 1200 killed and wounded; but the Danes suffered far more, for they had kept on reinforcing their batteries from the shore after they were no longer really defensible. Including prisoners, they lost over 6000 men. The scene at the close of the action was a fearful one. The sea was thickly



covered with floating spars, and lit by the red light of the burning wrecks. The English boats did all they could to secure their wounded and drowning enemies, but great numbers perished; and among all the grim things John saw, one especially made a deep impression on his mind. In later years he told a kinsman that "he saw a prodigious number of the slain at the bottom of the remarkably clear water of that harbour, men who had perished on both sides in that most sanguinary action."

A few months later the *Polyphemus* was ordered home with the rest of the Baltic fleet, and John found to his great delight that he was in time to obtain a berth in the *Investigator*, which sailed on July 7th for the South Seas. Her commander, Captain Matthew Flinders, had married an aunt of John's. He was a first-rate sailor, and John was likely to learn quite as much about navigation and practical seamanship under him as if he had remained in the regular service of the navy. He was very keen about his work, as can be seen from a letter written by Captain Flinders to Mr. Franklin.

"It is with great pleasure that I tell you of the good conduct of John. He is a very fine youth, and there is every probability of his doing credit to the *Investigator* and himself. Mr. Crossley has begun with him, and in a few months he will be sufficient of an astronomer to be my right-hand man in that way. His attention to his duty has gained him the esteem of the first lieutenant, who scarcely knows how to talk enough in his praise. He is rated midshipman, and I sincerely hope that an early opportunity after



THE SEA WAS LIT BY THE RED LIGHT OF THE  
BURNING WRICKS."



his time is served will enable me to show the regard I have for your family and his merit."

In the summer of 1802, the *Investigator* put into Port Jackson to refit, and from there John wrote a long letter to his mother, and tried once more to persuade her that a sailor was not always the sort of man that she and his father seem to have thought. It is a delightfully simple and dutiful letter, though John is more ceremonious towards his parents than any modern boy would be.

"I take this opportunity," he writes, "of returning my most sincere thanks to my worthy parents for their care of me in my younger days, for my education, and lastly for the genteel and expensive outfit for this long voyage; and if a due application to my duty and anxiety to push forward in my profession will repay them, they may rely on it as far as I'm able. . . . My father, I trust and hope, is more easy about the situation in life I have chosen. He sees it was not either the youthful whim of the moment, or the attractive uniform, or the hopes of getting rid of school that drew me to think of it. No! I pictured to myself both the hardships and pleasures of a sailor's life (even to the extreme) before ever it was told to me, which I find in a great measure to agree. My mind was then so steadfastly bent on going to sea, that to settle to business would be merely impossible; probably my father, like many others who are unacquainted with the sea, thinks that sailors are a careless, swearing, reprobate, and good-for-nothing set of men. Do not let that idea possess you or condemn all for some. Believe me, there are good and bad men sailors. It is natural for a person who

has been living on salt junk for several months when he gets on shore to swag about. Picture to yourself a man debarred from all sorts of comfortables, such as mutton, beef, vegetables, wine and beer. Would he not after that bår was broke begin with double vigour? But I have said enough on this subject."

A few months later he writes to his sister Elizabeth, and tells her what books he is reading. *Junius' Letters* and Shakespeare's Works, the *History of Scotland*, *Naval Tactics*, *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and sometimes Pope's works—this is the list he gives. He says that geography also employs a good deal of his time, and he winds up with the following piece of information, which must have rather puzzled his sister, as perhaps it was intended to do. "I am grown very much indeed, and a little thinner, so that I shall be a spruce and genteel young man and sail within three points of the wind, and run nine knots under close-reefed topsails, which is good sailing."

A few days after this letter was written the *Investigator* resumed her voyage and began to survey the coast of New Holland. Having successfully mapped the coast-line of the Gulf of Carpentaria, the ship began to show unmistakable signs of decay, and her timbers were found to be in so rotten a condition that she probably could not hold together for more than six months in ordinary weather, and would founder at once in a gale. Captain Flinders seems to have been prepared for this discovery, but the Naval authorities had given him to understand before he started that no better ship could be spared, and he had preferred to accept what he could get rather than give up the

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 147

expedition altogether. After an anxious and perilous voyage round the West coast of Australia, he succeeded in reaching Sydney in June 1803. Here the *Investigator* was again examined and reported on as "not worth repairing in any country." She was ultimately converted into a store hulk. It was arranged that Captain Flinders and a portion of his officers and crew should return to England in the *Porpoise* in order to report the facts of the case to the Admiralty,



" In the morning the crews managed to land "

and to try and obtain another vessel to continue the work.

But John was not to reach home without further adventures. Six days out of Sydney the *Porpoise*, and one of the two merchant vessels who were sailing under her pilotage, struck upon a reef. The second merchant vessel made off without rendering any assistance, and the two ships were left to a night of the greatest anxiety. In the morning the crews managed to land themselves and a certain quantity

## 148 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

of stores and provisions on a sand-bank about half a mile from the wreck. They were 200 miles from the nearest known land, and about 750 miles from Sydney, the nearest place from which they could hope for relief. Being British sailors, they faced the situation with cheerfulness and pluck. They made tents out of sails and hoisted a blue ensign with the Union Jack upside down on a tall spar as a signal of distress. They then took an inventory of their stores, and found that they had enough to last the ninety-four castaways for three months if they were careful. A council of officers was called, and it was decided that one of the six-oared cutters should be despatched for Sydney, under the command of Flinders, to obtain relief. He accordingly set out on 27th August, accompanied by the commander of the lost merchant ship and twelve men, with provisions and water for three weeks. John remained with the shipwrecked crews on the sandbank, and week after week they waited anxiously watching the horizon. October came, and still no sign of a ship. The stores were beginning to run low, and the date was approaching on which they had decided that if help had not come they would make a desperate dash for the mainland of Australia in two boats which they had built with materials saved from the wreck. At last, on 7th October, a sail was seen—Captain Flinders himself appeared in the *Rolla*, a ship bound for Canton, accompanied by the two Government schooners *Cumberland* and *Francis*. John and most of the shipwrecked crew embarked on the *Rolla*, but Captain Flinders, who was anxious to get home as soon as possible to report his discoveries and prepare his charts for publication, preferred to go straight to

England in the *Cumberland*. He was dogged by ill-luck, and when the ship touched at Mauritius on her way home, he was made a prisoner by the French Governor there, and detained for six and a half years until the island was captured by Admiral Bertie and Commodore Rowley, as you have already heard in the adventures of Charles.

John was far more fortunate; he went to Canton in the *Rolla*, hoping to get a berth on a homeward-bound ship from there. A fleet of sixteen Indiamen were on the point of sailing for home under Commodore Nathaniel Dance, and the crew of the *Investigator* was distributed among these vessels. John found himself on board the *Earl Camden*, which flew the Commodore's flag. These East India fleets were immensely valuable, and all the ships were armed; they carried from thirty to thirty-six light guns each, but they relied more on the brag of their appearance than on their fighting power. Their hulls were painted in imitation of battleships and frigates, so as to deceive the enemy's cruisers as far as possible. The French Admiral Linois was looking out for this fleet with a powerful squadron of five vessels—the *Marengo*, a line-of-battle ship of eighty-four guns, *La Belle Poule*, forty-eight guns, and two other vessels of thirty-six and twenty-four guns respectively, and an eighteen-gun brig, all under Dutch colours.

The Indiamen fell in with him just as they were entering the Straits of Malacca, and instead of making all sail to escape, Commodore Dance formed them in order of battle and made every sign of preparing for a regular engagement. Admiral Linois



## 150 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

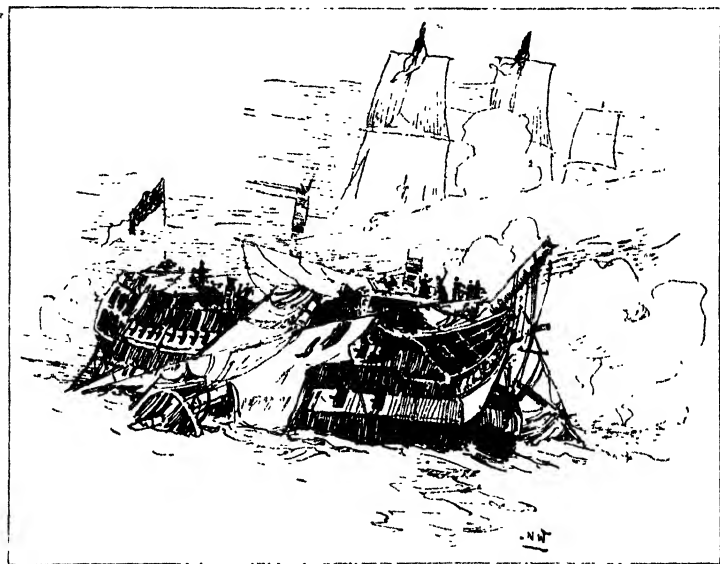
was perplexed by these manœuvres, and as it was late in the afternoon, he postponed his attack till the morning.

The Indiamen might have escaped under cover of darkness, but the Commodore preferred to wait and risk a fight. His ships lay to for the night, and Linois seeing them in the same position next morning, thought there must be men-of-war among them, and still did not attack. Dance ordered his ships to continue their course under easy sail, whereupon the French Admiral pressed forward with the intention of cutting off some of the rearward ships. Dance immediately faced about and ordered John, who was acting as signal midshipman, to run up the signal: "Tack in succession, bear down in line ahead, and engage the enemy." A short and sharp engagement followed, and after three-quarters of an hour of it, the French ceased firing and drew off. John was ordered to make the signal for a "general chase," and for upwards of two hours the English merchantmen hotly pursued the French squadron. The Commodore then thought it was time to recall his ships and to continue his voyage to England, where he arrived without further interruption, and was rewarded with a knighthood.

John was discharged from the *Earl Camden* on 7th August 1804, the day after her arrival in English waters. On 8th August he was appointed to H.M.S. *Bellerophon*, under Captain Loring; and he joined her on 20th September, after a brief six weeks' leave spent with his family and friends.

His new ship—the *Billy Ruffian*, as the sailors

called her—was a famous one. No one could forget how she fought at the Nile, where she stood up to the French Admiral's flagship, *L'Orient*, of 100 guns, and took more punishment than any seventy-four in all Nelson's battles. She lost there forty-nine officers and men killed and 148 wounded, out of a company of only 541; and at last she was compelled to drift



"She was compelled to drift out of action"

out of action with all her masts gone. But she refused to strike; and though she was beaten she had done her work, for she left her huge enemy on fire in two places, and saw her blow up before midnight. Her own losses were almost entirely due to one disastrous accident: she was in the act of placing herself on the starboard bow of *L'Orient*, in order to

rake her, when her anchor dragged and she drifted until she was close alongside the Frenchman, who carried double her weight of metal and got two broadsides into her before she could open fire. At Trafalgar she had almost as hard luck, as you will see, but she came out of it better.

John's first winter in the *Billy Ruffian* was spent in the blockade of Brest. Then in April 1805 the ship was taken over by Captain James Cooke, whom John describes as "very gentlemanly and active"; and under him she joined Lord Collingwood off Cadiz. When Nelson came out in September she hoisted the white ensign, and became one of the Trafalgar fleet.

You will read about the great battle elsewhere; but I must tell you a little of that part of it which concerns John and his ship. The *Billy Ruffian* went into action as the sixth ship in Collingwood's division. She had the reputation of being the best-manned ship in the fleet; her men wrote on their guns with chalk the words "Victory or Death," and they made them good. Twenty minutes after the *Royal Sovereign* broke the French line, the *Bellerophon* was engaging on both sides, and five minutes later her misfortunes began. She ran on board the French ship *L'Aigle*, her foreyard locking with the enemy's mainyard, so that only her forward guns on the starboard side could be brought to bear. While fast in this position she was attacked by four other ships—the *Monarca*, the *Montanez*, the French *Swiftsure*, and the *Bahama*; and *L'Aigle*, which happened to be the best-manned of the French fleet, swept her decks with rifle fire and hand-grenades. These gren-

ades burned the English gunners horribly, and one of them set fire to the lower-deck store room and nearly blew up the powder-magazine. The rifle fire was even worse; Captain Cooke was shot through the breast, and killed, almost at the same time as Lord Nelson in the *Victory*, and much in the same way—he had refused to take off the big gold epaulettes which made him a conspicuous mark. The Master was killed too; and at one time, out of forty-seven officers and men on the poop and quarter-deck, forty were killed or wounded.

John was one of the fortunate ones. He went into action on the poop, as signal midshipman, but during the hand-to-hand fighting when there was no signalling to be done, he made himself useful with the wounded. A French sharpshooter in the foretop of *L'Aigle*, who had already killed a midshipman to whom Franklin was speaking, shot at and killed a wounded black man while Franklin and a sergeant of Marines were carrying him below. "He'll have you next," said John to the sergeant; but the sergeant swore he should not, and said that he would go below to a quarter of the ship from which he could command the French rifleman, and would never cease firing at him till he had killed him. It was a pity no one had thought of this plan earlier, for it was quite successful. The Frenchman had one more shot at John, and the bullet struck the deck close to him as he jumped behind a mast. Then the sergeant was heard firing in his turn, for the great guns were almost silent by this time, from lack of men to fight them. Presently, John, looking out from behind his mast, saw the rifleman fall dead into the sea. When

the sergeant came up, he asked him how many times he fired. "I killed him," said the sergeant, "at the seventh shot." The distance was probably about forty yards, and John saw the rifleman's face so clearly that he said he should never forget it so long as he lived. Another thing he never forgot was the noise of the cannonade, for after Trafalgar he was always a little deaf.

When the decks of the *Bellerophon* were swept clear, the seamen of *L'Aigle* twice attempted to board her. But the English crew rushed up from below, and as the Frenchmen laid hold of the side of the ship, their fingers, says Franklin, "received severe blows from whatever the English sailors could lay their hands on. In this way hundreds of them fell between the ships and were drowned." In gunnery too the *Billy Ruffians* more than held their own; they soon silenced the big guns on the lower deck of *L'Aigle*, and fired their own guns upwards so as to burst her upper decks. When at last she drew off she could not return a single shot to the fire with which they raked her, and she soon afterwards struck to the *Defiance*. The *Bellerophon* then captured the *Monarca*, and when the battle ended she also took possession of another of her opponents. That was the *Bahama*, one of the four prizes that Charles saw afterwards at Gibraltar; and we know how he described her condition.

This was John's last great adventure of a purely naval kind. He spent nearly two years more in the *Bellerophon*, cruising off the coast of France; then in October 1807 he was transferred to the *Bedford*, as Master's Mate, and became an acting Lieutenant before

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 155

the end of the year. After seven years of cruising he again saw some fighting in the American War; he was wounded in the attack on New Orleans in 1814, and was strongly recommended for promotion. The *Bedford* came home in May 1815, a fortnight after the *Menelaus*, and lay near her at Spithead for a month. On July 5th John was promoted to First Lieutenant in the *Forth*, but he only served in her till September, and then came ashore to join the multitude of "distressed seamen" for whom their country had no further use. For three years he does not seem even to have asked the Admiralty to employ him.

### 2. HOW FRANKLIN SAILED AWAY FOR EVER

John Franklin's most interesting adventures came at the beginning and end of his life; his fighting days ended in 1815, when he was twenty-nine years old, and his most famous voyage was undertaken in 1845, when he was just fifty-nine. In the thirty years between he had a mixed career, containing a whole bookful of adventures; but about these I can only tell you just enough to show how his natural love of exploration grew stronger and stronger, so that in spite of all set-backs and cross-currents it showed itself at every possible opportunity, and brought him at last to a heroic death.

First, in 1818 the Admiralty, having no war to think of, turned their attention to discovering unknown seas. Two ships, under Captain Ross and Lieutenant Parry, were to try to reach the North Pole; and two others, the *Dorothea* and the *Trent*,

## 156 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

were to sail by a different route, and whether they reached the Pole or not, they were to search for the North-West Passage, which has always been believed to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Captain Buchan was to command the *Dorothea*, and Lieutenant Franklin was selected to take the *Trent*. These two ships were very small; the *Trent* leaked, and both were damaged in a heavy gale. They sailed in April and came back unsuccessful in October, after being stuck for some time in the ice pack.

In the following year two fresh expeditions were sent; Parry with two ships went again to Baffin's Bay, and Franklin was given the command of an overland party, with orders to explore the northern coast of Arctic America. This expedition was away three-and-a-half years, and failed to meet Parry and his ships, as they had been ordered to do. They returned to England in October 1822, and though they had been unsuccessful, great admiration was felt for their courage and endurance, for they had faced death by cold, treachery, drowning and famine, and had never despaired. Franklin was made a post-captain, and became also a Fellow of the Royal Society and a most popular character.

In 1823 he married, but immediately planned a fresh expedition, and in February 1825 he started again for North America. His wife consented to his going, but she was very ill, and died only six days after he sailed. This expedition too was a failure, and returned to England in September 1827. In 1828 Franklin married again; in 1829

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 157

he was knighted. Then for a time he seemed to be slipping back into his old profession, for in 1830 he was appointed to command H.M.S. *Rainbow*, under the command of Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm in the Mediterranean. There he spent three dull but happy years—the sailors called the ship “the *Celestial Rainbow*,” and described her as “Franklin’s Paradise.” After that came another complete change: Sir John was appointed Governor of Van Diemen’s Land, now called Tasmania. He was there till 1844, and though the people liked him, governing a colony was evidently not what he could do best. In January 1845 he was consulted about a new Arctic expedition, and at once asked to be allowed to lead it, in spite of his age, which was now all but fifty-nine. His eagerness gained him his request, and on 7th February he was appointed to the command of the *Erebus* and the *Terror*. These were the two ships which had sailed for the Antarctic regions under Sir James Ross in 1839, and after which Sir James had named the two volcanic mountains discovered on that expedition. It was at Cape Evans, under the shadow of Mount Erebus, that Scott built his headquarters and spent the winter before he started on his last journey to the South Pole. Mount Terror is on the same island, about twenty miles east of Mount Erebus.

Franklin himself took charge of the *Erebus*, with Commander James Fitzjames, a very able man, as his second in command. He had also with him Lieut. Graham Gore and Mr. Charles F. des Vœux. Each ship was to carry sixty-seven



## 158 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

officers and men, and provisions for three years. They were fitted with propelling screws and 50-horse-power engines, and with all the best appliances then known.

The route suggested by Franklin to the Admiralty was as follows. He intended to sail through Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait, and then instead of following the Channel towards Melville Island, where the ice was known to be very formidable, to take a south-west course and try to effect a passage as directly as possible to Behring Strait. If he found he was checked in this direction he would turn north up Wellington Channel, and try and get round to the north of the Parry Islands. He seems to have been quite confident that by one way or another he would succeed in getting through to the Pacific. But in point of fact he did not carry out either of these proposals. For reasons that we shall never know he chose the northerly course first, up Wellington Channel. Finding himself hopelessly blocked in that direction, he turned back and attempted to push his way due south towards the coast of North America, hoping no doubt to join the track of two former explorers, Simpson and Dease, and then to sail westwards through the straits named by them, which were known to lead out into open sea. But this change of plan was not discovered till many years after his death by piecing together the scraps of evidence found by the ships that went in search of him.

No one ever started on a hazardous expedition with a happier confidence than Franklin. "I wish,"

he writes from Greenhithe to his old father-in-law, Mr. Griffin, "that you could see the ship now. She is about as clear as she will be at sea and quite ready for sailing; the officers and the crew all fine young men and in excellent spirits. This day we had the happiness of joining together on board in Divine Worship, to praise God for His past mercies and to implore His guiding and protecting providence. In this spirit we all hope to begin, continue, and end our voyage."

And in a letter to his wife, sent back after the start, he wishes that he could write to all his friends "to assure them of the happiness I feel in my officers, my crew, and my ship." Naturally his men all liked and admired him in return. One of the younger officers wrote: "Old Franklin is an exceedingly good old chap—all are quite delighted with him—and very clever. He is quite a *Bishop*. We have Church morning and evening on Sundays, the evening service in the cabin, to allow the watch that could not attend in the forenoon. We all go both times. Gives sermons out of his sermon books, and I can assure you adds a great deal himself. They say they would sooner hear him than half the parsons in England."

Yes, Franklin was old, but he was still a first-rate leader, for he inspired his men with faith and a sanguine spirit. They all looked forward to hardship and success. Fitzjames even went so far as to give his friends his address for the following June, at Petropaulovski in Kamschatka! Not a man in the expedition thought of failure. In smaller games failure has to be thought of, because

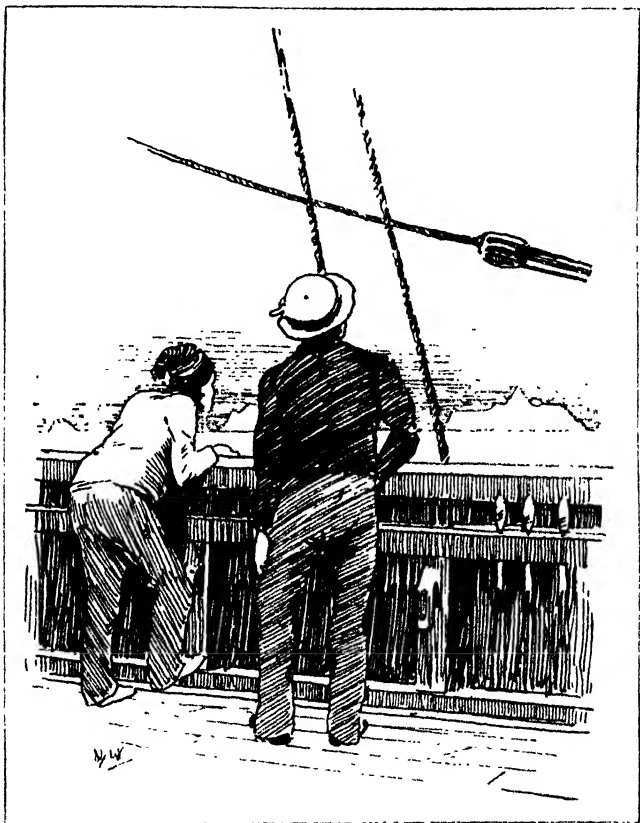
there will be further steps; but in the greatest game of all—in any game of life and death—there are no further steps: failure is the end. These men, like all who go south or north among the ice, had only one real object in going—the adventure itself. They were no doubt serving Science, but I believe they thought little of that: their country too—of course they wished England to be first everywhere: but what they went for was the fight against odds, with the highest stake paid down beforehand. And, to be honest, I believe that is why we love and honour these explorers; we see them strip themselves of all the comfort and ease that we are so carefully wrapped in every day: they go from among us into a track where they must struggle on alone, without any help of friends; they match themselves against difficulty and hardship and danger. Whether they come back or not we envy and admire them, because they invade the territory of death, and that is where life is freest and keenest.

So all England watched Franklin's departure, and followed his voyage till he was beyond hearing. His first letter home was dated 7th June, from Stromness, in the Orkneys.

After leaving Stromness the ships met with strong west and south-west breezes that carried them some way out of their course towards Iceland. But on June 22nd they successfully rounded Cape Farewell, driven by a strong southerly gale, and accompanied by a heavy sea. This weather lasted for five days, and then dropped to a calm. The sky cleared, and the coast of Greenland away on their right was for

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 161

the first time visible. As they sailed up it with a light wind they could see the rocky snow-covered



"They also met their first icebergs"

hills and the openings of the numerous fiords that indent the whole of that wild coast. They also

## 162 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

met their first icebergs, but none of them were very large.

During this time Franklin drew up and issued his written plans for the discipline and arrangements of the ship, and for the instruction of the officers in making the various scientific observations that would be required. He also prepared a code of signals to be used between the *Erebus* and *Terror* when they got among the ice. Sir Edward Parry had given him his own signals used on a similar occasion, and Franklin found that he had only to add a few more to these, relating to the steam machinery, to make them complete. He was full of energy, and so eager to push on and not lose one day of the navigable season that Fitzjames could scarcely persuade him to shorten sail at all, even in rough weather.

On July 4th the ships came to anchor off Whalefish Island, near Disco. Before they entered the harbour the Esquimaux came out and piloted them to the anchorage by keeping just ahead in their canoes. Some of them with their wives and children came on board the *Erebus* the morning after their arrival, and Franklin wrote home to his wife that they had "all clean-washed faces, and hair neatly combed and put up." He was also delighted to find when he visited them on shore that many of them read their Bibles, and that the Danish missionaries held a school in a turf hut for the children, where they were taught to read. But he said he preferred seeing them "alongside of the ships, away from the odours that surround their residences."

While he was at anchor here, he made many inquiries respecting the state of the ice further north in Baffin's Bay. He learned that the last winter had been severe with strong winds, and that the ice had broken up early in May, so that there seemed every prospect of getting across to Lancaster Sound early in the season.

On Friday, July 11th, the transport which had accompanied him drew away, and made her preparations for sailing home. Lieutenant Griffiths, who was in command of her, wrote to Sir John Barrow, the Secretary to the Admiralty, and described the ships when he parted from them. He says they were perfectly crammed with their three years' supply of provisions, fuel, and clothing. Every hole and corner was filled, and a good deal was secured on deck, as there was little fear of heavy seas so far north. All were in the highest possible spirits, and determined to succeed if success were possible. He goes on to say: "I have very great hopes, knowing their capabilities, having witnessed their arrangements and the spirit by which they are actuated; a set of more undaunted fellows never were got together, or officers better selected. Never were ships more appropriately fitted or better adapted for the arduous service they have to perform."

On the evening of July 12th Franklin's ships sailed from Disco. On July 26th they were seen by the *Prince of Wales*, a whaling ship, made fast to a large iceberg in Melville Bay. It is recorded in the log of the whaler that ten of the chief officers of the expedition paid a visit on board, and that all were well and in remarkable spirits, expecting to

finish the operation in good time. The next day they parted company; the *Erebus* and *Terror* sailed away among the icebergs, and were never seen again.

### 3. THE SEARCH FOR FRANKLIN

The story of Franklin's last voyage from this point onwards is like no other story that you can read. It is intensely interesting, and moves us with sympathy and admiration and pity; but it all passes in dumb show. In fact it does not really pass before our eyes at all: we see what happened only as we might see things happening in a mirror, or in a cinematograph picture, long after the real date of the scenes, even after the men in the picture had long been dead. And if this seems strange and moving to us, imagine how it must have seemed to Franklin's wife, and to all that generation of Englishmen who loved and regretted him.

The year 1846 brought no news whatever of the expedition, but as Lady Franklin knew that her husband had been fully prepared to spend at least one winter among the ice, she did not allow herself to become too anxious. But when the next year came still without bringing any news the Government decided that it was time to send out a search party. Two vessels, the *Enterprise* and the *Investigator*, sailed from England in June 1848 under the command of Sir James Ross. Much new land was explored, but no traces of Franklin's expedition were found, and they returned in the autumn of the following year. A reward of £20,000 was offered by the Government, to which Lady Franklin added



THE FRIES AND TERROR SAILED AWAY.





## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 165

another £3000, for any exploring party that might "render efficient assistance to Sir John Franklin, his ships or their crews."

Several vessels made the attempt; some sent by the Government, some by private enterprise. Most of them were quite unsuccessful. Time went by and hope sank. Then in the summer of 1850 Captain Ommanney, of H.M.S. *Assistance*, spied a cairn on the summit of Beechey Island. He succeeded in landing, and found not merely a cairn but three tombstones. From their inscriptions he learnt that Franklin had spent his first winter near here, and had erected these stones to the memory of three of his men who had died during the winter. Here at last were the first traces of the missing expedition. Again a terribly long time passed. It was not until four years later that Dr. Rae came home from an overland journey, bringing some silver dishes and spoons engraved with the arms and initials of Sir John Franklin and other officers. These he had bought from the Esquimaux on Boothia Felix. From them he had also learnt that a party of about forty white men had been seen some years before on the coast of King William's Island, and that they had travelled towards the mouth of the Great Fish River where they had all died of starvation.

This seemed to end all hope; but Franklin's friends would not give him up, alive or dead. In 1855 the Government sent an exploring party down the Fish River. Some traces of the crews of the *Erebus* and *Terror* were discovered near the river mouth, but no records were found, and no further information was got from the natives.

On the return of this expedition Lady Franklin begged the Government to follow it up by one more exhaustive search, as it was clear now in what direction to make it. She was supported in this petition by a number of distinguished friends. No answer was given her till 1857, and she was then told that as there could no longer be any possibility of saving life, the Government with much regret had come to the conclusion that they were not justified in exposing any more brave men to such serious risks.

But Lady Franklin knew her countrymen would stand by her if she refused to leave the matter there. With the help of Sir Roderick Murchison she raised sufficient money (including a large sum contributed by herself) to equip a private expedition. She bought the *Fox*, a screw yacht of 177 tons burthen, and obtained the willing services of Captain Leopold M'Clintock to command her. This officer had already distinguished himself in the search under Sir James Ross and in two other Arctic expeditions, so that he was thoroughly experienced, and his whole heart was in the cause.

The yacht was entirely refitted, and was cased externally with stout planking to protect her from the ice, while inside she was supported with strong cross beams and iron stanchions. The accommodation was a good deal cramped, as room had to be made for provisions, and the officers' mess-room for five persons was reduced to a space only eight feet square.

Numbers of applications came in from all parts of the country from men willing to "serve in any capacity." Some of them had never even seen the sea,

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 167

but all were most anxious to join in the search. Out of the twenty-five men selected by Captain M'Clintock seventeen had already served on Arctic expeditions. Lieutenant W. R. Hobson, R.N., was appointed second in command, and Captain Allen Young sailing master. Provisions were taken for twenty-eight months. The Government, though declining to subsidise the expedition, supplied all the powder and shot, and over 6000 lbs. of pemmican, also ice saws, lemon juice, medicines, books, instruments, and an ample quantity of Arctic clothing. In fact the various Government departments were ready to give anything that M'Clintock asked for, if they had it in store.

By the end of June the preparations were complete, and on the last day of the month Lady Franklin came on board to bid the men farewell. On leaving the ship she was so much moved that the Captain tried to restrain the enthusiasm of the crew, but could not prevent them from giving three hearty cheers. She left with M'Clintock a letter to be read when the *Fox* was fairly at sea. In this she told him what she hoped he might be able to accomplish, and ended by saying, "that under any and all circumstances whatever, such is my unbounded confidence in you, you will possess and be entitled to the enduring gratitude of your sincere and attached friend, Jane Franklin." This was a lady sending forth her champion in the good old fashion of our ancestors.

On the morning of July 1st, 1857, the *Fox* sailed from Aberdeen. Cape Farewell was sighted on the 12th, and Godhaab in Disco was reached on the 31st. Sledge dogs and a native driver were still required. Ten dogs were obtained here at once, but M'Clintock

## 168 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

was advised to go up Disco Fiord to where the Esquimaux were catching and drying salmon trout, to find his driver. The Esquimaux came off in their kayaks from the fishing station, and a young man of twenty-three, named Christian, volunteered his services. The crew promptly took him in hand. They washed him thoroughly, cropped his long black hair, and dressed him in sailor's clothes. The admiring glances of his countrymen reconciled him to the discomfort of his new and unaccustomed outfit.

The *Fox* reached Upernivik on the 6th of August, and anchored for two hours to send on shore the last bag of home letters, and to embark fourteen more dogs. Then as the weather was blowing up for a gale she turned seaward to get away from the dangerous rocky coast as soon as she could. When four miles out she narrowly missed running on a sunken ledge of rock, and between the howling of the wretched dogs and the tumbling about of everything on board, the crew passed a most uncomfortable night. The following morning the gale dropped and the weather became foggy. Baffin's Bay, up which the *Fox* was now sailing, is completely frozen over every winter. In the spring the ice breaks up and drifts southwards. In ordinary seasons ships can then either get round the north side of this pack ice or push through the middle, where there is usually a passage, or pass round the southern edge.

The *Fox* first tried for the middle passage, but this year there had been many northerly winds which had closed the passage, and there appeared to be no way of pushing through. M'Clintock therefore decided to try the North Passage. He passed successfully

through the most dangerous part of Melville Bay, but on August 12th he had to make the ship fast to an iceberg and wait, hoping for a north wind to disperse the ice. He was able gradually to push some way further into the pack, but the north wind never came, the ice closed in all round, and by the end of the month it was clear that a winter in this pack was inevitable. The ice itself, and the *Fox* with it, was drifting to the W. and N.W., and on the 13th of September M'Clin-tock calculated that only twelve or fifteen miles of pack separated her from the open sea to the west; but all efforts to move the ship more than a few yards every day were in vain, and as the weather grew colder preparations had to be made for the winter.

The men spent their spare time playing games on the ice, skating, fishing, and shooting seals for the dogs. These animals lived on the ice near the ship, and were not allowed on board; they were given about two pounds of flesh every two days, but they were always ravenously hungry, and would sometimes invade the ship in the middle of the night in search of food. When the deck light happened to go out they rushed up over the snow that had been banked round the ship for the sake of warmth, and tore round the deck like wolves, seizing everything that could possibly be devoured. "Why bless you, sir," said Harvey, one of the old sailors, to the Captain, "the wery moment that there light goes out, and the quartermaster turns his back, they makes a regular *sortee*, and in they all comes." "But where do they come in, Harvey?" "Where, sir? Why everywheres: they makes no more to do, but in they

## 170 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

comes clean over all." This sometimes happened so suddenly and unexpectedly that the sailors rushed up from below half dressed to see what was the matter, and then seizing broomsticks or anything else handy, they chased the intruders round and round the deck for two hours perhaps before they could all be driven out of the corners into which they had retreated.

Once Lieut. Hobson gave a dog a kick to get him out of the way. Unfortunately the leather slipper which he was wearing flew off, and was immediately seized upon by the delighted animal and carried off to be devoured in private. The Esquimaux say that the only food the dogs will not touch is fox and raven. However, a raven was eaten entire by an old fellow called Jack, who not long after saved the lives of a litter of puppies by mounting guard on the kennel and keeping off all hungry intruders.

One sad event occurred at the beginning of December. The engine-driver Scott injured himself so severely by falling down a hatchway that he died two days later. This was a serious loss to the expedition, as it left only one man, Mr. Brand the engineer, who was capable of working the engines.

Christmas day was celebrated with great festivities. After divine service the ship was decorated with flags and a feast prepared, for which numbers of extra dainties such as plum-pudding, meat pies, hams and pastry were served up. All the men joined in drinking Lady Franklin's health, and there was a general sense of good feeling and hopefulness in spite of the disappointment at not having got into Barrow Strait before the winter. The wind rose in

the north and the ship continued drifting southwards, as she had been doing for some weeks, in the direction which would help her to get free of the ice as soon as possible in the spring. Altogether things looked more cheerful, and Captain M'Clintock wrote in his journal that he believed he was the happiest individual on board that happy evening.

New Year's Day was made the occasion of another feast, and the Captain was awaked at midnight by two flutes and an accordion outside his door. This was followed by a procession or band of men dressed up, who played lustily on their frying-pans, kettles, and other kitchen utensils.

So the long weeks passed by, till on January 28th the edge of the sun appeared above the horizon again after an absence of eighty-nine days. According to Arctic custom the colours were hoisted, and an extra half gill was served out to celebrate this event. At last, towards the end of March, the ice showed signs of breaking up under the strong N.W. gales that were blowing. The *Fox* was still drifting southwards with the ice, sometimes at the rate of nearly forty miles in forty-eight hours. It was an anxious time when the ice began to break round the ship itself, as the pressure of the broken edges grinding against her sides might at any moment be too much for her. As she approached the edge of the pack there was a heavy swell. The waves rose to a height of ten and sometimes thirteen feet, and flung the great masses of ice against the ship. She was in the greatest danger all through the night of the 24th of April, and Brand had to work at the engines for eighteen hours on end to keep her head on to the swell. The



## 172 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

bells rang violently the whole time, and on several occasions the ice choked the screw, so that for some minutes the engines were stopped dead. "After yesterday's experience," wrote M'Clintock in his



"According to Arctic custom the colours were hoisted"

journal, "I can understand how men's hair has turned grey in a few hours." Both the ship and the machinery behaved admirably, and on the 25th the ship emerged safely into the open sea, having drifted 1194 geographical or 1385 statute miles in the 242

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 178

days that she had been imprisoned. M'Clintock steered straight for the nearest station on the coast of Greenland, to obtain fresh reindeer meat and to rest his crew.

Towards the end of May the *Fox* started once more for the North Passage, which the whalers at Godhaab had reported likely to be open early this year. It was by no means all plain sailing, but by the 27th of July she was safely landed across Baffin's Bay and anchored at Ponds Inlet, near the mouth of Lancaster Sound. She left here on August 6th, and five days later anchored inside Cape Riley, opposite Beechey Island. M'Clintock had brought with him from Disco a marble memorial tablet that Lady Franklin had sent out in 1855 by Lieutenant Hartstein, an American explorer. Hartstein had failed to reach Beechey Island, and had left it at Godhaab. M'Clintock now set it up where Lady Franklin had intended it to stand, near the three other graves at Franklin's first winter quarters. But the memorial was little comfort to anyone; Franklin's fate was still a mystery.

The *Fox*, meanwhile, replenished her coal from surface seams on the neighbouring shores, and on the 16th of August she sailed down Peel Strait for twenty-five miles without interruption. Then she found her way blocked by a line of unbroken ice from shore to shore. M'Clintock decided to turn back into Barrow Strait, and to make for Bellot Strait, between North Somerset and Boothia Felix. The *Fox* passed Fury Point on the 20th, and there was much excitement on board as she entered the narrow channel and steamed westwards between the steep rocky

## 174 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

shores, which rose in places to a height of 1500 or 1600 feet. When she had proceeded for about ten miles, and was half-way through, she ran into a mass of pack ice extending for five miles. At the turn of the tide she was carried back with it to the mouth of the channel at the rate of six miles an hour, and she very narrowly missed being driven on to the rocks and destroyed.

As the pack ice was in the same position the next day, M'Clintock tried for another passage further south, but finding none, he returned and tried again to push through the Bellot Strait. Night came on, and he had to anchor when rather more than half-way through in a little bay which the men christened Fox's Hole. At dawn they pushed three miles further west, and then were bitterly disappointed to find the way again hopelessly blocked.

But the courage of these men was unconquerable. They began by making preparations for wintering east of Bellot Strait. Then on the 30th, a reconnoitring party from the hills having reported the Strait completely free of ice, they made a fourth attempt to get through, but with no better success; the same old ice blocked the way. Then the luck changed; a few days later northerly winds sprang up unexpectedly and dispersed the pack, and on September 6th the *Fox* actually steamed right through the Strait and made fast to the ice at the western outlet. Close to her was a small island called Pemmican Rock, and on this a store of provisions for future sledging parties was deposited. It was now October, and as no further progress could be made this year, M'Clintock decided to return and

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 175

go into winter quarters at Port Kennedy, a sheltered bay near the Eastern entrance of the Strait. Sledging journeys were at once undertaken to explore the surrounding country, and to lay depots of provisions along the routes likely to be followed in the spring.

The winter was unusually severe, and there were incessant gales. There was only one disaster, but that was a terrible one—the loss of Mr. Brand the engineer. He was found lying on the deck early one morning, having apparently died from apoplexy. This left only the two stokers to manage the engines, and neither of them knew anything about machinery.

On Christmas Day the thermometer varied between  $76^{\circ}$  and  $80^{\circ}$  below freezing-point, and a fierce north-wester howled through the rigging, driving the snow at a great pace. The men kept warm below decks, and feasted and enjoyed themselves as they had done the year before. It was a year and a half since they had left home, but they were as high hearted as ever, for they had now good reason to hope for success in their enterprise.

The sun appeared again on the 26th of January, and preparations for the spring sledging parties were in full swing throughout the month. Two parties were arranged. M'Clintock, accompanied by Petersen and two other men, was to travel towards the magnetic pole, to communicate if possible with the Esquimaux in those regions, and to examine the shores of King William's Island. The second party, under Captain Allen Young, was to trace the coast of Prince of Wales Land and lay depots of provisions for the main journey later on. Lieutenant Hobson was

## 176 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

left in charge of the ship, with orders to send out a search party if either M'Clintock or Young were absent beyond the twenty-four days for which they carried provisions.

On February 17<sup>th</sup> they started on their respective journeys. It was bitterly cold, and the hardness of the frozen snow made many of the dogs go lame. Some of them also suffered from fits, and by the time the magnetic pole was reached on March 1<sup>st</sup> six of the fifteen dogs were quite useless. There were no signs of the Esquimaux; and as the dogs were in such a feeble condition and provisions were getting low, M'Clintock decided that after one more march in the direction of Cape Victoria, he must return to the ship.

They were just starting, when four men appeared in the distance walking towards them. M'Clintock and Petersen took their revolvers and went to meet them. But the Esquimaux were quite peaceable, and did not seem the least surprised at meeting M'Clintock and his companions. They said they were seal hunting, and as their village was a long way off, M'Clintock hired them, at the rate of a needle each, to build a snow hut in which they could all pass the night. He also told them he wished to barter with them, but he carefully said nothing of the real object of his visit.

At last his chance came. The sight of a naval button on one of their dresses gave him an excuse for asking questions. They said the button came from some white people who had starved on an island in a river. One of their tribe had been to the island to get wood and iron, but had not seen any of the white men.

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 177

The next day they all travelled on towards the village. At the end of ten miles M'Clintock said he could go no further, but would wait there and would buy everything that had belonged to the white men if the Esquimaux would bring the things on the following day. Accordingly some forty-five people, the whole population of the village, turned up and brought silver spoons and forks, several buttons, part of a gold chain, and a silver medal, as well as knives made of the iron and wood of the wreck. All these M'Clintock bought at the rate of a few needles or a knife for each object. One old woman, when she had got as much as she could for herself, pulled her baby by the arm out of the fur dress in which, according to the Esquimaux fashion, she carried it, and held it up perfectly naked to M'Clintock. Petersen said she was asking for one more needle for the child. This M'Clintock gave her as quickly as possible, for the temperature was 60° below freezing-point at the time. However, none of her companions seemed to think she was exposing the child to any unnatural risk.

Now came a fresh discovery. A spear 6½ feet long, apparently made from the gunwale of a light boat, was bought from one man; and he then told Petersen that a three-masted ship had been crushed by the ice some years before in the sea to the west of King William's Island. The ship sank, he said, and no wreckage was obtained from her, but all the people landed safely. This accounted for one of the lost ships, but nothing could be learnt of the other, or of the direction from which the ships had come.

## 178 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

M'Clintock reached the *Fox* again on March 14th. He had travelled 420 miles, and had completed the mapping of the coast-line of Arctic America. He found that Captain Allen Young had successfully laid his depots, and had returned on March 3rd. He therefore called his whole crew together and informed them of what he had learnt from the Esquimaux, and told them that as the second ship was still unaccounted for, he meant to carry out all the plans as previously arranged. He was not a man to leave his work half done.

On 2nd April the two principal sledging parties left the *Fox*. They were commanded by Captain M'Clintock and Lieutenant Hobson, and each consisted of a sledge drawn by four men, besides a dog sledge and a dog driver. Petersen volunteered to drive M'Clintock's dogs, while the Captain himself drove the five puppies, which were harnessed for the first time to a small sledge packed with their own supply of food. They were destined for sale or exchange with the Esquimaux.

The two parties travelled together as far as Cape Victoria, on the south coast of Boothia Felix, opposite King William's Island. On the way they met again some of their friends the Esquimaux. They were much more communicative than they had been in the early spring, and a most important piece of information was learnt from them. A young man from whom M'Clintock bought a knife told him of a second ship that had been forced on shore by the ice not far from the one that sank. This they had concealed from M'Clintock in the spring, but on questioning them closely

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 179

he now learnt that in the autumn of the year when the ships perished the white people all went away to the "great river," taking their boats, and that their bones were found there the following winter. The body of a large man with long teeth had also been found on the stranded ship. Bit by bit the mystery was being dug out of the silence; it was grim work for the friends of those dead men.

Cape Victoria was reached on the 28th, and here the two parties separated. M'Clintock generously sent Hobson in the direction most likely to lead to important discoveries, in order to secure for him the chance of promotion. He was to make straight for Cape Felix, the most northern point of King William's Island, and then to search the west coast of the island. M'Clintock himself went southwards, towards the mouth of the Great Fish River. He marched mostly by night, to avoid the snow blindness that constantly attacked him and his companions. No natives were met till the 7th of May, when about a dozen inhabited huts were seen. From these men M'Clintock bought some more pieces of engraved silver plate, and he also sold them two of his puppies. He was told it was five days' journey to the wreck, but that very little of it now remained, as almost everything had been carried away by them and their friends. There had been many books, but they had long ago perished from the weather. One old woman, the last who had visited the wreck, said that the white men had gone away towards the Great River, and that "they fell



## 180 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

down and died as they walked along." She could not say how long ago that was, or give any idea of the number of the white men.

On the 12th of May M'Clintock crossed Point Ogle, and encamped on the ice in the mouth of the Great Fish River. He explored Montreal Island, but found no cairn or other relics, and no natives; and on the 19th he turned back towards the southern shore of King William's Island. He was now on the track of the retreating crews, and he followed the shore westwards towards Cape Herschel, examining every step carefully as he went along. A cairn nearly five feet high was taken down stone by stone and the ground beneath broken up with a pickaxe, but there was nothing there, and the march was continued. Shortly after midnight, on the 25th, M'Clintock was walking along a gravel ridge near the shore, when he suddenly came on a human skeleton half buried in the snow. It was bleached quite white, and lay upon its face. The snow was quickly and carefully removed, and every scrap of clothing gathered up and examined. From these fragments M'Clintock conjectured that the remains were those of a steward or officer's servant, and that he had fallen and died on the march, as the old woman had said.

The party now pushed on eagerly to Cape Herschel. The conspicuous cairn placed there by Simpson in 1839 was taken to pieces, but nothing whatever was found; though M'Clintock felt convinced that some record must have been left here which had probably since been destroyed by the Esquimaux. The half de-

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 181

molished cairn looked very much as if it had been recently tampered with. This was a severe disappointment, but great news was close at hand. When they had gone about twelve miles beyond Cape



“Suddenly came on a human skeleton half buried in the snow”

Herschel they found a small cairn built by Hobson's party. It contained a note to say that he had reached this point, his furthest south, six days previously, that he had had very bad weather, had seen nothing of the

## 182 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

wreck and had met no natives; but at Point Victory on the N.W. coast of the island, he had found the long sought record of the lost expedition.

This record was very briefly worded, but it told quite enough for Captain M'Clintock to be able to unravel the mystery of Sir John Franklin and his lost crews, and to settle their fate beyond a doubt. This is what had happened. After parting from the whalers in Melville Bay in July 1845, Franklin passed through Lancaster Sound into Barrow Strait, and then tried to push his way northwards up Wellington Channel. He sailed up it for 150 miles, and then was blocked by the ice, and returned into Barrow Strait by a channel that had not before been discovered between Bathurst and Cornwallis Islands. As the season was then well advanced, he went into winter quarters at Beechey Island, where three sailors died and were buried.

In the following spring he tried for the southerly passage, and sailed down Peel Strait. It must have been much freer of ice than when the *Fox* tried it, for he reached a point within twelve miles of the north of King William's Island before the winter of 1846-7 closed in. The crews must have made their winter preparations in very good spirits, as until then they had been most successful, and had every hope of getting through in the following summer to the sea adjoining the North American coast, now within ninety miles of them, and so westwards to the Pacific. On the 24th of May Lieutenant Gore and Mr. Charles F. des Vœux, with six other men, left the ships on a sledging expedition southwards. No doubt they went to examine the state and extent of the ice, and

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 188

also to find out whether the channel really did lead into the already known sea of which Franklin had once said, "If I can but get down there, my work is done; thence it's plain sailing to the westward." They left a record of events up to date under a cairn at Point Victory on the 28th of May, and added that Sir John Franklin was commanding the expedition, and that all was well.

This was the record found by Lieutenant Hobson. But when he found it, the continuation of the story had been written round the margin of the original paper in a different hand, and was signed by Crozier and Fitzjames. This addition was dated 28th April 1848, eleven months exactly since the paper was first left under the cairn by Lieutenant Gore.

From this marginal addition the search party learnt that on the 11th of June 1847, less than a month after Gore's party left the ships, Sir John Franklin died. It seems most probable that Lieutenant Gore would have returned some days before that date, and so would have brought Franklin the good news that the North American coast could be seen from the southern hills of King William's Island; and that the North-West Passage had actually been discovered, although the great ice pack then blocked the way. So we may reasonably hope that Franklin knew before he died that his voyage had not been in vain. We cannot be certain of it. Nor do we know how he died; but we may feel sure that he met death as quietly and courageously as he had met all the big adventures of his life. And we may be very thankful that he was spared the terrible months that followed.

All the summer the crews waited and watched for

## 184 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

the ice to break up and let them through into the sea beyond. But the ships were fast in a great ice stream that moved only inch by inch southwards through the narrowing channel, now called Victoria Strait; and no ice saws and no amount of blasting powder could force a passage for them. The autumn came, and with very heavy hearts the men must have made the preparations for their third Arctic winter. At last this too passed away, and in April, either because the men could no longer bear the monotony and hopelessness of their situation, or because their provisions were running dangerously low, Captain Crozier, now in command, and Commander Fitzjames decided to abandon the ships and make for the North American coast on foot across the ice. They set out on the 22nd of April, 105 men in all, dragging their provisions and several boats on sledges in case they came to open water. On the 25th they found Lieutenant Gore's record (he had died during the winter), and Crozier and Fitzjames broke open the tin which contained it, and wrote and signed a brief account of the events of the past year on the same paper. They ended by saying that they were starting on the following day for Back's Fish River. That only a few ever reached the river, and that these too eventually perished of starvation, M'Clintock had already learnt from the Esquimaux.

The note left by Lieutenant Hobson also said that he had found quantities of clothing and articles of every kind strewn about near the cairn containing the record, as if the men had there thrown away everything they could possibly spare to lighten their

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 185

loads, knowing that they would have to march for their lives.

After reading Hobson's note M'Clintock pushed on fast, as his provisions were getting low, and he was still far from the *Fox*. On May 29th he reached the most westerly point of the island, and named it Cape Crozier, in honour of the leader of the retreating crews. The following day he came on a large boat mounted on a sledge, and containing portions of two human skeletons. To his surprise the sledge, instead of being directed southwards was pointing N.E. On thinking it over, M'Clintock decided that some of the party who had found themselves too ill or weak to continue the march must have turned back towards the shelter of the ships. Then finding the big sledge much too heavy for them, they had left the two weakest of their number what provisions they could spare (some tea and chocolate and one empty pemmican tin was all that M'Clintock could find), and had pushed on towards the ships, meaning to return with fresh supplies. The boat was full of articles of every kind. There was a great deal of clothing, including seven or eight pairs of boots. Several small devotional books were found, and a Bible with many marginal notes and whole passages underlined. There were also five watches and two double-barrelled guns, several knives and needles, and two rolls of sheet lead. In the after part of the boat were a number of spoons and forks, some with Sir John Franklin's crest, and the rest with the crest or initials of several of the other officers. It is probable that this plate was issued to the men as the only means of saving it, for

## 186 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

not a single iron spoon such as sailors use was found.

After leaving the boat M'Clintock followed the coast-line northwards, and reached Point Victory on 2nd June. Here another note from Hobson told him that a duplicate record had been found on the south side of Back Bay; but it contained no further information. He had seen no trace of the wreck. M'Clintock left here a copy of the Franklin record, and a record of his own discoveries. He found quantities of heavy articles, such as cooking stoves, pickaxes, shovels, magnets, and brass curtain rods, strewn about the cairn, and also a medicine chest and a sextant, both quite undamaged. There was a heap of discarded clothing four feet high, but none of the garments were marked, and all the pockets were empty.

These were the last traces of the *Erebus* and *Terror* that were found. From here M'Clintock went eastwards till he reached the mainland of Boothia Felix, and then northwards towards the *Fox*, where he and his party arrived in time for a late breakfast on the 19th of June. M'Clintock's first inquiries were for Hobson, as a note left at a recent depot had said he was seriously ill and was hurrying on to be under the doctor's care. He had reached the ship, it seemed, five days before, unable to walk or even to stand, but he was already better, and was in excellent spirits. The rest of the crew were all fairly well, and the ship was trim and in good order. The only misfortune had been the death from scurvy of the ship's steward.

Captain Young had been back to the ship at the

## ADVENTURES OF JOHN FRANKLIN 187

beginning of the month to visit the doctor, but after three days' rest, in spite of all protests, he had insisted on starting off again to finish his exploration on Prince of Wales Land. His continued absence now made M'Clintock uneasy, and towards the end of the month he took out a search party. To his great relief he met Young at Pemmican Rock on the 27th. Though his health had been much injured by the very bad weather and all that he had endured, yet he had succeeded in mapping out 380 miles of new coast-line; and the better food and rest on the *Fox* soon put him right.

The crew were now hard at work painting and smartening up the ship for her homeward voyage. At the beginning of August the ice in Bellot Strait began to break up and drift about, and after some days of anxiety and many delays the *Fox* succeeded in extricating herself. On Sunday, 21st August, M'Clintock wrote in his journal: "At sea—out of sight of land!"

Godhaab was reached on the 29th. Here they found letters and papers waiting for them, and here they said good-bye to Christian and the dogs. Five days later they sailed for England, and arrived in the Channel on 20th September. M'Clintock landed at Portsmouth, and went straight to London to report himself to the Admiralty. On the 27th, when he assembled his crew for the last time, he had the pleasure of presenting the Arctic medal to all his companions who had not already received it for previous Arctic service. He was also able to inform Lieutenant Hobson that he would shortly be promoted to the rank of Commander.



## 188 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

M'Clintock himself was knighted by the Queen in the following year.

The relics that had been brought home in the *Fox* were placed by the Admiralty in the United Service Institution, where they may still be seen. A sum of £2000 was voted by Parliament for the monument which now stands in Waterloo Place "to the memory of the great navigator and his brave companions, who sacrificed their lives in completing the discovery of the North-West Passage, A.D. 1847-1848."

# TRAFALGAR

## 1. THE PLAN OF ATTACK

IF there is one story in the world that every Englishman should know by heart, it is the story of Trafalgar. If you do not know it, you are a rich man who lives like a poor one, simply because no one has told him of his great inheritance.

This is a fortunate moment for writing about the battle ; it is easier to do it now than it has been for some years past. A Committee of Admirals and Historians has been inquiring into the subject, and though naturally enough they have not found out anything new, they have put together and printed the ships' logs and other evidence, and so enabled us to dismiss the doubts which ingenious people had raised about Nelson's tactics—about the way in which he planned and fought the action. I shall begin by saying a word or two about these tactics, for there is no real interest to be got out of watching any game unless you know what the players are doing ; and a sea-fight when you do understand it is the finest game ever played by men against men. Then when we have seen what Nelson's plan was, and what moves he made to carry it out, we can go on to the ships and the men he commanded, and see how he and Collingwood led them into action, and what they all saw and said and did, and how they fought, and in the end how they

## 190 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

won the greatest battle in our history ; and how some of them gave themselves for their country by a death that will never be forgotten.

Nelson left St. Helen's in the *Victory* on the 15th of September 1805, and joined Collingwood and the fleet on the evening of the 28th. In his private diary for that day he records that he "saw the enemy's fleet in Cadiz, amounting to 35 or 36 sail of the line." The next day, Sunday, September 29th, was his forty-sixth birthday, and he spent part of it in receiving his captains, and laying his plan of attack before them. He wrote next day to Lady Hamilton : "When I came to explain to them the '*Nelson touch*' it was like an electric shock. Some shed tears ; all approved. 'It was new—it was singular—it was simple!' and from admirals downwards it was repeated, 'It must succeed, if ever they allow us to get at them!'" This reception, Nelson says, caused the sweetest sensation of his life. "It was not only my pleasure to find it generally approved, but clearly perceived and understood."

Now this plan of attack—the *Nelson touch*—was a long written memorandum, a copy of which was given to each captain. There is no need to set it out in full, because it provides for meeting the enemy in either of two different positions, to leeward or to windward ; and we are only concerned with one of these. It happened that the English fleet had the windward and the French the leeward position when the time came. Also the numbers on both sides were smaller than Nelson expected ; the enemy had only thirty-three of the line instead of forty-six, and as he himself had only twenty-seven instead of the forty he

had counted on, he formed his fleet in two divisions only, instead of three, as originally intended.

The following are the most important words in the Memorandum, in view of what actually happened; they deal with "the intended attack from to windward, the Enemy in Line of Battle ready to receive an attack."

"The divisions of the British Fleet will be brought nearly within gunshot of the Enemy's Centre. The signal will most probably then be made for the Lee Line to bear up together, to set all their sails, even steering sails, in order to get as quickly as possible to the Enemy's Line, and to cut through, beginning from the 12th ship from the Enemy's Rear. Some ships may not get through their exact place, but they will always be at hand to assist their friends; and if any are thrown round the Rear of the Enemy, they will effectually complete the business of twelve Sail of the Enemy. . . . The entire management of the Lee Line, after the intentions of the Commander-in-Chief are signified, is intended to be left to the judgment of the Admiral commanding that Line.

"The remainder of the Enemy's Fleet . . . are to be left to the management of the Commander-in-Chief, who will endeavour to take care that the movements of the Second in Command are as little interrupted as is possible."

Now what was the real point of this plan? It was this: Nelson knew that he would be fighting a fleet considerably bigger than his own; he therefore determined to attack and overwhelm one part of the enemy before the other part\* could come to their rescue. Collingwood with the Lee Division of

## 192 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

fifteen of the line was to cut off twelve sail of the enemy's rear and capture or disable them, while Nelson himself with the remainder of the British Fleet was to manage in one way or another to tackle the enemy's van and centre so as to ensure that Collingwood should be uninterrupted, or "as little interrupted as possible." The advantages of this plan are quite clear: the Lee Division would have a certain victory in the rear with fifteen ships to twelve; there would be a stiff fight somewhere in the centre, in which Nelson with his twelve ships would hope to hold his own till Collingwood had "completed the business" of the rear and could come on to reinforce him; the enemy's van would be left without an opponent, and would probably lose much time in getting round to windward so as to join in the action.

You will notice that no very definite orders are given about the details of the approach towards the enemy. Nelson only speaks of what will "most probably" be done; and he does not expect all the Lee Division ships to "get through their exact place" in the line. That part of the battle is to be "left to the judgment" of Collingwood; the other part is "to be left to the management of the Commander-in-Chief." There was in the Memorandum a little bit of a plan, showing the enemy's fleet and the British Divisions, all parallel to one another, in straight lines; but Nelson makes no reference to this drawing, and at the outside it can only have been meant to show what would "most probably" be the position. In the letter in which the memorandum was sent to Collingwood, Nelson said:

"I send you my plan of attack, so far as a man dare venture to guess at the very uncertain position the enemy may be found in. But, my dear friend, it is to place you perfectly at ease respecting my intentions, and to give full scope to your judgment for carrying them into effect. We can, my dear Coll., have no little jealousies. We have only one great object in view, that of annihilating our enemies, and getting a glorious peace for our country. No man has more confidence in another than I have in you; and no man will render your services more justice than your very old friend,

"NELSON AND BRONTË."

The Memorandum itself was, of course, a masterpiece; Collingwood and the captains all thought it so, and a distinguished admiral now living has said that "the simplicity and scope of that order have never been sufficiently appreciated." But what is quite as striking and unusual, quite as much a proof of Nelson's genius for war, is his generosity towards his second in command, and his confidence in him.

The next problem was how to get Admiral Villeneuve to come out and fight. "The enemy are still in Port," Nelson wrote on October 3rd, "but something must be done immediately to provoke or lure them to a battle." He did not know that on the very day of his own arrival in the fleet, Villeneuve had received peremptory orders to put to sea. But he soon heard that the French ships had re-embarked the troops which they had landed some time before; and he began to be "*very, very, very* anxious" for the rest of the ships to arrive from England, for he had

## 194 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

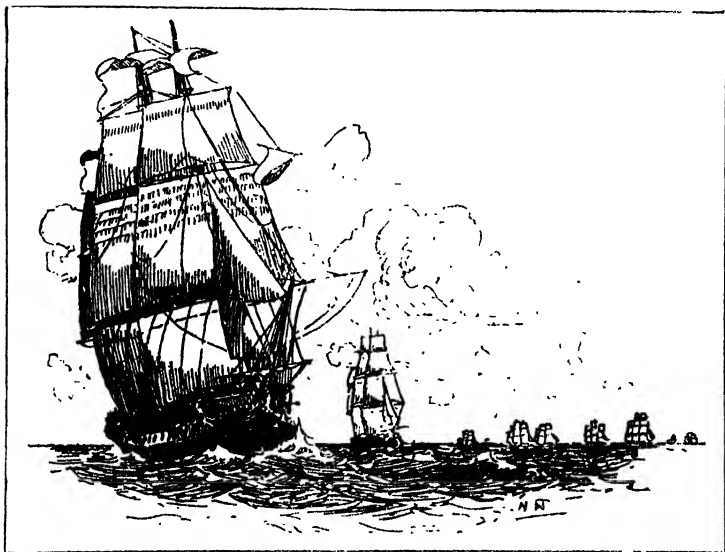
at present only twenty-three. Of course he would fight, and he said, "I shall not doubt of spoiling any voyage they may attempt"; but what he wanted was not merely to beat his opponents, it was to make sure "that as an enemy's fleet they may be annihilated."

Fortunately Villeneuve still delayed, and the reinforcements began to arrive from England: by 10th October the *Defiance*, the *Royal Sovereign*, and the *Belleisle* had joined, besides the *Amphion*, *Naiad*, and *Renommée* frigates. On the 13th the *Agamemnon* and the frigate *L'Aimable* arrived, after being chased by the Rochefort squadron. The *Agamemnon* was Nelson's own old ship, and she was now commanded by one of his favourite captains. When she was signalled, he exclaimed with glee: "Here comes Berry; now we shall have a battle." He might well say that, for besides many smaller engagements, Sir Edward Berry had already fought in seven general actions, and he was destined to see two more—Trafalgar and St. Domingo.

On the 14th the *Euryalus* frigate signalled, "Enemy at the harbour's mouth." Nelson accordingly kept his fleet well out of the way, some fifty miles to the west, so as to leave Villeneuve room to bolt, but he arranged a complete chain of ships to keep him informed by signals: the *Mars* and the *Colossus* were to be five leagues east of the fleet, then the *Defence* and *Agamemnon* about seven leagues nearer Cadiz, then the *Euryalus* and *Naiad* still nearer, and the little *Weasel* under Lieutenant Peter Parker right in by the harbour mouth.

So they watched for five more days. Then at last, at 7 A.M. on Saturday, the 19th, the combined

fleet began to get under way; by half-past nine the signal reached Lord Nelson, and he instantly gave the order for a "General chase S.E.," in order to cut off the enemy if they should try to run for the Mediterranean. He reached the Straits of Gibraltar by daylight on the 20th, but the combined fleets



"The frigates were still hanging on to the enemy"

were not there; they had been slow in getting out, and he had to go back north again to find them. By the afternoon the weather had turned squally, but the frigates were still hanging on to the enemy and reporting their movements, and this they continued to do "most admirably all night." As Nelson always said, they were the *eyes* of the fleet; and apparently they could see even in the dark.



## 2. PREPARING FOR BATTLE

At six o'clock on the morning of Monday, the 21st of October, the enemy were seen from the *Victory* bearing east by south at a distance of ten or twelve miles, with Cape Trafalgar in a direct line beyond them some twenty miles away. At 6.30 the sun rose on a still sea. Before 7 the *Victory* made the signal to "Prepare for Battle."

Now a description of a battle is of very little use unless it enables you to see the fighting, and to see it in a way not possible to those who were actually engaged. Every man in a fight has his own place, and sees and hears from that place only; but we want to see and hear from every point of view in turn, and also to get from time to time a sort of bird's-eye view, a clear general sight of the whole movement at once. The necessary facts are all recorded ready for us; what we have to do is to take them in the right way. We must use our imagination as if it were an aeroplane, or a hydroplane, in which we can fly high or low, and even board the ships themselves in turn. In this way we shall be able alternately to watch the manœuvring of the fleets as fleets, and then to swoop down closer and see the fighting of the ships and men as separate individuals.

Let us then hover for a moment above that still Trafalgar sea. Right before us lies the British fleet strung out in an irregular mass with two centres. The centre to the south is Collingwood's flagship, that to the north is Nelson's. The nearest ships to the *Victory* are the *Polypphemus*, *Revenge*, and *Dreadnought* to the S.E., and the *Conqueror* and *Ajax* to the N.E.,

with *Neptune*, *Orion*, and *Mars* beyond them, and the frigates *Euryalus* and *Sirius* still further away towards the enemy. The ships are all heading north; the enemy, lying parallel to them on the starboard side, are all heading south, but the wind is so light that both fleets are almost motionless. They look like two flights of white-winged moths that have been blown down upon the water.

But now both fleets begin to move. The English flagships turn to the east and move in the direction of the enemy; the two divisions draw off from one another and begin to follow their leaders in two clusters, each gradually thinning out to form a single line. The French are in an irregular line with a thick clump at the head of it—that is Admiral Gravina's squadron. But they too are changing formation; they all wear ship together, so that their heads lie north instead of south, and Gravina's squadron becomes the rear instead of the van. This is peculiarly fortunate for Nelson's plan, because it brings the enemy's rear opposite Collingwood and the centre opposite Nelson, which is just what was expected in the Memorandum.

In so light a wind these movements take a long time, and we can come down to see what is going on on board the *Victory*.

Nelson has been on deck since daybreak, dressed as usual in his Admiral's frock-coat, with the four stars which he always wore on his left breast. For the first time in his life he has forgotten to put on his sword. He is happy and confident, declaring to his flag-captain Hardy that he will "not be contented with capturing less than twenty ships of the line."

## 198 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

The men are happy too; the drums will soon be calling them to quarters with the rattling tune of "Hearts of Oak." The top-men are aloft, shaking out all topsail reefs and setting royals and studding-sails. On deck the hammocks, with the men's blankets rolled up in them, are being fastened all round the sides to protect the gangways; some of them are also lashed to the more important parts of the rigging. Rope nettings are being hung above the deck round each mast, to catch anything that may fall from aloft. The sails, the decks and the boats are being drenched with water, to guard against fire, and the buckets are then left standing full. Buckets of fresh water, with swabs, are placed by every gun, for the men, and match-tubs half full of water, over which the smouldering match is to be hung. Wet blankets are hung round every hatch-way, and along the whole of the passage to the magazines.

Down below the carpenter and his mates are unstripping all cabin partitions and furniture: all crockery, kits and sea chests are being stowed away; pigs and bullocks are being hoisted and thrown over-board. The gunner and his mates have already filled the shot racks, and are now below in the magazines and store-rooms, serving out cartridges, flint gun-locks, lengths of match and powder tubes. The master-at-arms and corporals are telling off the most active men as boarders, and fitting them out with two pistols each and a cutlass. All along the gun-decks the guns are being got ready by their crews. The leaden covers have been taken off, the tompons drawn from the muzzles, the ports opened,

the lashings cast loose, and the running tackle tried. The sponges and rammers are laid ready, cheeses of wads are piled beside the shot, and the decks are strewn with wet sand.

It is now eight o'clock, and the *Victory* is drifting towards the enemy at less than three knots an hour. The Admiral has signalled his frigate captains to come aboard; he means to keep them with him "till the very last minute." He regrets the enemy's change of direction; they have made his attack easier, but they have at the same time opened the port of Cadiz for a possible escape, and brought the shoals of Trafalgar under our lee. This explains his signal to the fleet to "Prepare to anchor" after the action. He mounts the poop, watches his two lines forming, and gives orders for moving the furniture from his cabin, especially Lady Hamilton's portrait: "Take care of my guardian angel." But first he goes himself to the cabin, and there makes a codicil to his will, and writes his last prayer in his private diary.

"May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my Country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious Victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it, and may humanity after Victory be the predominant feature in the British Fleet. For myself individually, I commit my life to Him who made me, and may His blessing light upon my endeavours for serving my Country faithfully. To Him I resign myself, and the just cause which is entrusted to me to defend. Amen. Amen. Amen."

## 3. THE SIGNALS

It is now more than half-past eight; time for us to leave the *Victory* and fly aloft for another bird's-eye view of the fleets. The enemy are now only about six miles distant; but the wind is variable, and seems to be falling lighter. It is N.W., shifting towards W. and W.S.W., and there is a heavy ground-swell from the west.

The English divisions are obeying Nelson's signal to "bear up and sail large on course steered by Admiral," but they are not in the regular Order of Sailing, which was to have been the order of battle. In the proper Order of Sailing neither the *Victory* nor the *Royal Sovereign* would have been at the head of their line; but there they are, because Nelson and Collingwood can neither of them bear to let themselves be passed, especially while they can each see the other racing ahead.

At 8.45 Collingwood is making his first signal—of course to his own division only. He is thinking of the Memorandum, according to which the lines were "most probably" to be laid parallel to the enemy's line before striking. So he orders his own ships to "form the larboard line of bearing." Now a line of bearing is not a line ahead, nor is it a line abreast, but something between the two. That is to say, that on a line of bearing the ships are neither dead behind one another, nor dead level, but sailing in a diagonal line, bow and quarter; though of course they are always their proper distance apart, and all sailing in the same direction. Collingwood could not wait for his line to form up abreast of him, but if they sailed

on a line of bearing they would end by all breaking the enemy's line in different places instead of all following him through the same place.

We can see the ships answering this signal and doing their best to carry it out. The difficulty is that to form "*the line of bearing*"—a line in which the ships are all exactly seven points from the wind—they need time, and Collingwood has no time to give them. Nelson is hurrying on, not even trying to form any such line in his own division.

Evidently he is anxious about the *Royal Sovereign*; her next astern, the *Tonnant*, is falling behind, and Collingwood will be unsupported. The *Victory* is signalling, "Report if *Tonnant* cannot close; order other ships in between." Ten minutes later Collingwood obeys by ordering *Tonnant* and *Belleisle* to "interchange places in the line," and signalling to *Belleisle* and *Dreadnought* to "make more sail." No doubt they wish they could.

The line of bearing is not being formed very well; but Collingwood is bent on getting some formation of the kind. He orders the *Belleisle* to "take station bearing S.W. from Admiral"—that will keep her at any rate from coming in straight behind the *Royal Sovereign*. Five minutes afterwards he gives the *Revenge* an order of the same kind: "Take station bearing from Admiral, as pointed out," followed by "make more sail." The *Revenge* is a fast sailer, and we can see that she succeeds in taking station decidedly more towards the south, and thereby making a shorter cut towards the enemy's rear.

Now Nelson is signalling again—not to his own division but to Collingwood's, which of course as

## 202 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

Commander-in-Chief he has a perfect right to do. He orders the *Mars*, one of the fastest ships, to "take station astern of *Royal Sovereign*." What does this mean? Collingwood knows. It means that Nelson wants to get *Royal Sovereign* back a place or two from the head of the line, as she ought to be in the true Order of Sailing. He intends to risk himself, but he does not want to risk Collingwood. Evidently *Tonnant* and *Belleisle* cannot overhaul the *Royal Sovereign*, but perhaps *Mars* can. Anyhow it is a hint to Collingwood not to be so foolhardy. Collingwood knows, but he ignores the hint, and immediately repeats his former signal to the whole of his division: "Take station bearing from the Admiral, as pointed out, and make more sail."

Nelson goes on signalling to the *Mars*. At ten minutes past ten he orders her outright to "head the larboard column"—that was her proper place in the order of battle. We can see her straining every inch of her canvas to do it; but Collingwood does not wait for her. Nelson can see that he is not shortening sail. At 10.45 he repeats the order to the *Mars*, "Head the column." Her master "crowds her with studding-sails," but to no purpose; and Nelson gives her no more orders for the present. Collingwood is as obstinate as he is, and he admires him for it.

At 11 the fleets are only about two miles apart, perhaps less. The enemy are now quite stationary, with their topsails laid to the mast, "awaiting an attack." They are puzzled to know where the attack will fall. Their line has sagged into a sort of crescent, and their rear has come in so much that it is becoming almost parallel to our lee division—the best thing

Collingwood could have desired, for his ships can each turn to starboard and go straight for her "opponent in the line." They begin to do so, like a fan which is being moved forward and is opening gradually as it goes.

Nelson is now signalling to the little *Africa*, his smallest ship, lost sight of in the night and now coming in from the north to rejoin. "Make all sail possible, with safety to the masts." She has to come right along the enemy's line from van to centre, but she does not shirk.

At 11.21 the first shot of the day is heard. Who fired? It looks like *Bellerophon*—only a sighting shot, or perhaps an accident. The rebuke "cease fire" goes up on the *Victory's* signal halyards.

At 11.40 the *Victory's* telegraph begins working. Nelson is telling Collingwood, "I intend to pass or go through the end of the enemy's line to prevent them from getting into Cadiz." But his anxiety is groundless: the enemy are going to fight. They stay motionless, except for the slight advance of a ship here and there to close up the line. The only gap which remains is a rather wide one in the centre.

Now Nelson for the last time signals the *Mars* to "make more sail," but Collingwood replies by ordering all his division to do the same, and prepares for his final onset by signalling the *Belleisle* to "keep in close order." Nelson sees that the great moment is at hand; tactics are over for Collingwood: but there is one more word to be said to the whole fleet. Up it goes, never to come down again: "England expects that every man will do his duty." All this time Nelson's own column is heading straight for



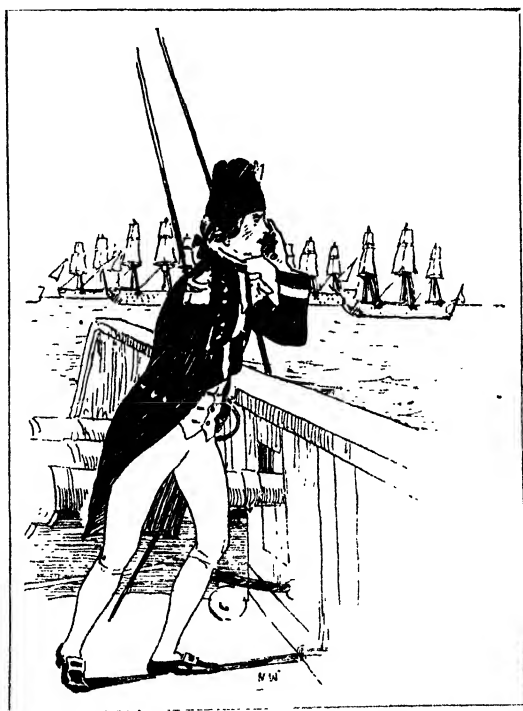
## 204 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

the first fourteen ships of the enemy, to the north of the gap. It is impossible to tell where he means to break the line, just as it is impossible to tell where a fine swordsman is going to drive in his blade. He does not know himself, from one moment to another: he is feeling by instinct for the right spot. Meantime he signals to the *Africa*, to "engage the enemy more closely." It may cost her her life, but it will keep the French busy in the van, and perhaps blind them to his real intentions. Once more he orders her to "make all sail possible, with safety to the masts."

Meantime we can see that the *Téméraire* has been steadily gaining on the *Victory*, and is now creeping right up to her. Someone has been getting anxious about Nelson, and reminding him that he, like Collingwood, is not in his right place in the order of battle. *Victory* was not intended to lead the line, and it is very dangerous for the Commander-in-Chief to go first into such a fire. For a time Nelson seems to have consented. *Téméraire* may go ahead, if she can; but he is not going to shorten sail for her. Still she is coming up fast. No! there is Nelson, at the last moment, leaning over the side and shouting back with that slight nasal twang of his: "Captain Harvey, I'll thank you to keep in your proper station, which is *astern* of the *Victory*." And there is the signal aloft: "*Téméraire*—take station *astern* of *Victory*." It is followed by the last message to the whole fleet: "Engage the enemy more closely"; and that is to remain flying so long as there is an enemy left to engage.

Look once more at those quiet lines of high white

winged ships, drifting slowly over the calm heaving sea. It is easy to see now where everyone of Collingwood's will strike: no one knows yet what Nelson's will do. Suddenly a white puff shoots out



"Captain Harvey, I'll thank you to keep . . ."

from the *Royal Sovereign's* bows, and the boom is instantly drowned in thunder from all the ships awaiting her. As she fires the French and Spanish Admirals all break their flags, and Nelson knows at last where Villeneuve is—in the 80-gun *Bucentaure*,

## 206 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

almost in centre of the line. He turns to starboard and goes right at him. For a quarter of an hour the *Victory* is hammered by five ships without returning a shot. When she reaches the line there is no room to pass, the *Redoubtable* is too close up to the flagship. But if Nelson is to have his rival Chief, it must be this or nothing: he puts up his helm and crashes in under the *Bucentaure's* stern. *Téméraire* and *Neptune* are with him; their broadsides follow one another like a prolonged peal of thunder; the whole centre of the battle is rolled in smoke.

### 4. COLLINGWOOD'S BATTLE

We have watched the advance of the two English divisions so far: the moment has come when we shall be able to watch them no longer, for they will one by one be lost in the dense cloud of smoke. We have seen the first English gun fired by the *Royal Sovereign*, and answered by five or six of the enemy: we have seen the Admirals on both sides show their flags, and the whole British fleet immediately hoist the famous "pale white ensign"—for Nelson, though he was a Vice-Admiral of the White, and Collingwood a Vice-Admiral of the Blue, would not allow any distinction to be made between the two divisions. For five minutes every glass in the fleet is turned on Collingwood's ship, sailing alone into the fire. "See," says Nelson, "see how that noble fellow Collingwood carries his ship into action!" And in the same moment, as though the words had been heard across the mile of sea between them, Collingwood answers: "What would Nelson give to be

here!" Then he passes out of our sight, and so it is with all his ships as they reach the enemy in succession; we cannot see them: we must be content to hear the record of their doings in that tremendous fight.

The *Royal Sovereign* broke the line astern of the huge *Santa Ana*, the Spanish Admiral's flagship, and ahead of the *Fougueux*—"about the twelfth from the rear." In passing she raked the Spaniard with a double-shotted broadside, which put out of action fourteen guns and nearly 400 men: her star-board broadside she gave to the *Fougueux*, with less effect. She was then engaged by the *San Leandro*, *San Justo*, and *Indomptable* as well; but four of the five soon found they were injuring each other by their cross-fire, so they drew off and left the two three-deckers to fight it out. At 1.20 the *Santa Ana*'s mizzen-mast went: at 2.10 she ceased firing: at 2.20 her other masts fell, and she surrendered. The *Royal Sovereign* herself was now unmanageable too, for her mainmast had come down astern and carried away the mizzen-mast with it. At 3 the *Euryalus* took her in tow, and at the end of the day she was lying near the *Victory*. The *Belleisle*, eight minutes after her leader, cut the line astern of the *Indomptable*, an 80-gun ship, firing into her and also into the *Fougueux* and *Santa Ana*. Her own mizzen-mast soon went, six feet above the deck, but she beat off the *Indomptable*. The *Fougueux* then turned upon her with the *San Juan Nepomuceno*. They shot all her rigging and sails away, but she beat them both off. The French *Achille* and the *Aigle* took their places, and the *San Justo* and

## 208 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

*Leandro* added raking broadsides as they passed. Her mainmast now went by the board, and soon afterwards the French *Neptune* came down from Nelson's battle and shot away her foremast and bowsprit. Owing to the wreckage she was almost unable to fire a gun, but she nailed an ensign to the stump of a mast, and kept a Union Jack waving on a handspike. After holding out for three hours she was at last relieved by the *Polyphemus*, *Defiance*, and *Swiftsure*. The crews cheered each other, and the unbeaten *Belleisle* promptly "sent a boat and took possession of a Spanish 80-gun ship, *Argonauta*." They had lost 126 men killed and wounded.

The *Mars*, on her way down, suffered severely from the raking fire of the ships ahead of her, the *San Juan Nepomuceno*, *Pluton*, *Monarca*, and *Algésiras*. She attempted to break the line between the first two, but was driven in front of the *San Juan* by the *Pluton*, who followed and engaged her. Her sails being now shot to pieces, she nearly drifted aboard the *Santa Ana*, and was then raked by the *Monarca* and *Algésiras*, but the *Tonnant* came up and took them off her. She fired into the *Fougueux*, and was badly raked again by the *Pluton*, who swept her quarter-deck and killed her captain, George Duff. After this she passed to leeward up the line into Nelson's battle, and ended by receiving on board as prisoners the French Commander-in-Chief, Villeneuve, with his Captain of the Fleet and retinue. Her loss was ninety-eight in all.

The *Tonnant* relieved the *Mars* by raking the *Algésiras* and capturing the *Monarca*. But Admiral

Magon came on again in the *Algésiras*, and the *Pluton* and *San Juan Nepomuceno* joined him. The three of them shot away the *Tonnant's* fore and main top-masts, and wounded Captain Tyler. But the *Tonnant* was a very powerful 80-gun ship: she locked rigging with the *Algésiras*, and in forty minutes shot away her foremast and killed or wounded 200 of her crew, as well as Admiral Magon himself, with a loss of only seventy-six of her own men. The *Algésiras* then struck; but meantime the *Monarca* rehoisted her colours, only to strike them a second time to the *Bellerophon*.

The *Bellerophon* got into action almost exactly at the same moment as the *Mars* and *Tonnant*, but of course further towards the rear. You will find some details of her fighting in the Adventures of John Franklin. Like the *Belleisle*, she was for a time isolated and attacked by four enemies at once. In thirty minutes she lost her main and mizzen-top-masts, her captain, and her master. But she stuck gloriously to her equally heroic opponent, *L'Aigle*, and almost destroyed her, hull and crew, so that she fell an easy prey to the *Defiance*, a fresh ship. So it happened again and again: one ship smashed an enemy, and another captured her. They played the game as a team, each for all and none for his own hand. To make them surrender was impossible, for they knew their friends would come if they held on.

The *Colossus* and *Achille* went in almost together, still more to starboard of their leaders. The *Achille* drove off the *Montanez*, and passed on to assist the *Belleisle*, who was drifting with three enemies upon her. On her way she fired into the French *Argonaute*,

## 210 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

whom she claims to have taken. But at that moment her namesake, the French *Achille*, came between and robbed her. The *Argonaute*, however, was a beaten ship—she escaped into Cadiz with her captain and 400 men killed and wounded. The *Achille* now took on a fresh enemy, the *Berwick*, and in one hour had completely ruined her; when she struck all her masts were tottering, her hull “dreadfully cut up,” her captain and many officers killed, with more than fifty men, and nearly 200 wounded. The English *Achille* lost seventy-two men.

The *Colossus* received a galling fire as she approached “her opponent in the enemy’s line.” This was the French *Swiftsure*, and having engaged her the *Colossus* immediately lost her again in the smoke. She then found herself alongside the *Argonaute*, just escaped from the English *Achille*, and in ten minutes silenced her remaining guns. She next engaged the *Bahama* and the French *Swiftsure* in one of the most desperate fights of the day. Her two enemies had already helped to disable the *Bellerophon*; they now shot away the mizzen-mast of the *Colossus*, and cost her 200 killed and wounded—a loss one-third greater than that of any other English ship. But in return she disabled and captured them both, with the help of one telling broadside from the *Orion*, who had come down from Nelson’s battle. These two prizes were among the four saved and taken to Gibraltar.

Next came a group of three ships, the *Dreadnought*, *Polyphemus*, and *Revenge*. The *Revenge* seems to have struck in ahead of the others—she claims to have been in action only ten minutes after the *Royal Sovereign*. She broke the line “between the fifth

and sixth ships from the rear," and began by giving *L'Aigle* a couple of raking broadsides. Then Gravina's flagship, the three-decker *Principe de Asturias*, attacked her as well, and she had a hard time of it. She lost seventy-nine men, and had all her topsail yards shot away, her bowsprit and all her masts wounded, and three guns dismounted. But she pounded away till the *Dreadnought* came up and saved her.

The *Dreadnought* was a three-decker with 98 guns, and she began by half stunning the *Principe de Asturias*, then turned upon the *San Juan* and captured her in thirty-five minutes, and began again upon the *Principe*. That unfortunate ship was now receiving the *Thunderer's* fire also; she was losing heavily, and soon made sail for Cadiz with 148 officers and men killed or wounded, including Admiral Gravina himself, who died after his left arm had been amputated. The *Dreadnought* followed her, but failed to overtake or disable her.

The *Polyphemus*, a 64-gun ship, came up in company with the *Dreadnought*, who hailed her and asked to be allowed to pass and attack the *Principe*, being a three-decker and a better match for her. So the *Polyphemus* went on down the rear, and raked the stern of the French *Achille*, bringing down her mizzen-mast and silencing her guns. Thinking she had struck, the *Polyphemus* left her and helped the *Defence* to take the *San Ildefonso*. She then headed off the *Berwick* and *Argonaute*, who had struck but were trying to get away to Cadiz: the *Argonaute* eventually succeeded.

The *Swiftsure* took her share in fighting that



## 212 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

strong and unfortunate ship the French *Achille*, but her log gives no account of the action.

The *Defiance* first attacked the *Principe de Asturias*, who hauled off, and then *L'Aigle*, who had already fought five English ships, and been almost beaten by the *Bellerophon*. The *Defiance* grappled her and boarded at once, hoisting the English colours on her. But the Frenchmen went on firing desperately from the tops, the forecastle, and the lower deck. The English boarders were called off, the lashing cast off, and the ships allowed to drift a pistol shot apart: then the broadside opened again. This was too much for the dying *Aigle*: in half an hour she called for quarter, and well she might. Her hull was pierced in every direction, her starboard quarter beaten in, and of her splendid crew, the finest in the French fleet, 270 were killed and wounded. She was an Eagle worthy of her name.

The *Defence* and *Thunderer* came up next, both very late. The *Defence* engaged the *Berwick*, who headed off, and then the *San Ildefonso*, who soon struck to her and the *Polyphemus*. The *Thunderer* began by going to the help of the *Revenge*, who was also being assisted by the *Dreadnought*. The French *Neptune* joined the *Principe de Asturias* in fighting them, but in the end both ships took to flight.

The last ship of the lee division was the *Prince*. Being a slow sailer, and very much behind at the start, she was ordered to "take station as convenient," and came down between the two columns. She did not get into action till about three o'clock, and was the only ship in the fleet that suffered no

loss at all. But she was not useless: she helped the *Dreadnought* by giving the *Principe de Asturias* two broadsides, and then went on down the van finishing off wounded ships. She must have been a terrible sight, with her ninety-eight guns and her uninjured sails, as she bore down on the French *Achille*. That gallant ship was dying, like the *Aigle*. She had fought the great *Belleisle*, the English *Achille*, the *Swiftsure*, and the *Polyphemus*; her guns were silent, her foretop in flames, but she would not strike her flag. Then came the three-decker, fresh and fierce: "gave her three broadsides, which cut away her masts and set her on fire . . . out boats to save the crew. Saved 140 men." It was now four o'clock. Collingwood's battle was over; with fifteen ships against nineteen he had "completed the business of the rear."

## 5. NELSON'S BATTLE

The enemy had been firing at Collingwood for five or ten minutes, and he was now in the act of breaking their line, when Nelson's battle began. The *Victory*, with the ships immediately astern of her, had been heading in the direction of the French van, and the log of the *Euryalus* records that "the van and centre of the enemy's line opened a heavy fire" upon her. After two minutes of this, "Lord Nelson returned the enemy's fire in the centre and van in a determined, cool, and steady manner." The *Victory* then altered her course to starboard, and made for the French Admiral's flagship in the centre. Her own log says that she "opened our fire on the enemy's van in passing down their line."

## 214 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

The *Téméraire* and *Neptune* were close behind her, so close that they had to advance at last *en échelon*, each on the starboard quarter of her next ahead. The sight of these three great three-deckers, moving slowly and irresistibly down upon him, made a tremendous impression upon Villeneuve. He told Captain Blackwood two days after the battle "that he never saw anything like the irresistible line of our ships: but that of the *Victory*, supported by the *Neptune* and *Téméraire*, was what he could not have formed any judgment of."

But during this last 500 yards of her approach the *Victory* began to suffer heavily from the concentrated fire. Her mizzen-topmast was shot away, her sails riddled, her wheel broken, and many of her men killed and wounded. At last she was able to strike back. Sixteen minutes after the firing began she passed under the *Bucentaure's* stern and fired into her, first her fore-castle carronade—a sixty-eight pounder loaded with a huge round-shot and a keg of 500 musket balls—and then a double-shotted broadside. The smoke blew back into the *Victory's* port-holes in a suffocating cloud: black dust from the crumbled wood-work covered her quarter-deck. The gun-crews listened with joy to the crashing of their shot from stern to stem of their enemy: by this one broadside the French Admiral afterwards acknowledged to have lost over 400 men, and had twenty guns dismounted.

Behind the *Bucentaure* lay the French *Neptune*, and she immediately raked the *Victory's* bows as she came hard round to starboard and ran on board the *Redoubtable*. "I cannot help it," Nelson had said

to Hardy; "it does not signify which we run on board of. Go on board which you please: take your choice." In a moment the two ships were firmly locked together by their rigging, and both crews were anxious to board: but the Frenchmen were prevented by the firing of the *Victory's* starboard carronade, loaded with bullets as before, and by a broadside from the *Téméraire*, which cut them down in a heap; while the English suffered heavily by the hand grenades and bullets from the enemy's tops, one of which struck down Nelson himself within an hour after the two ships grappled. But I will tell you more of that presently.

In the meantime the *Téméraire* was making herself an everlasting name. She went with Nelson into the thick of the enemy, engaging the *Santisima Trinidad* and two other ships at once. Then when the *Victory* had locked on the larboard side of the *Redoutable*, the *Téméraire* grappled the Frenchman's starboard side, and at the same time engaged the *Fougueux* with her own starboard broadside. There the four ships lay, all lashed together, English and French alternately, and it was the *Téméraire* who captured both the Frenchmen. She began by boarding the *Redoutable*, and had just taken her when the *Fougueux* came up to the rescue. This ship had been driven off by the *Royal Sovereign* and *Belleisle*, and had crossed the gap into Nelson's battle. When she got within a hundred yards the *Téméraires* gave her a full broadside, and when she drifted alongside they caught her fore-rigging and lashed it to their own spare anchor. When the Frenchman had struck, the *Redoutable's* main-yard and all the wreck of

## 216 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

sails and rigging fell on to the *Téméraire's* poop, and entirely encumbered the after part of the ship. In that condition, with a prize lashed to each side and the greater part of her batteries out of action, the fighting *Téméraire* continued to fight, raking the *Santisima Trinidad* with some of her foremost guns.

The *Victory* lost 132 men, the *Téméraire* 123, and both had their rigging cut to pieces and all masts badly wounded. Moreover, the *Téméraire* was so crushed between her two enemies that eight feet of her lower deck were stove in on the starboard side, and the whole of her quarter-galleries on both sides were carried away. But all this was nothing to the losses of the *Redoubtable*, who had, according to the French official returns, out of a crew of 643, 300 killed and 222 wounded, including nearly the whole of her officers.

The English *Neptune* was close upon the *Victory* and *Téméraire*; she gave her first broadside to the *Bucentaure*, and then passed on to the huge *Santisima Trinidad*, whose main- and mizzen-masts she shot away by the board in about an hour and a half, and her foremast ten minutes later; after which the Spanish colours came down and the English Jack was waved over her quarter. The Neptunes deserved this honour, for they had stuck close to the great Spaniard, with only 98 guns against her 130; but they were helped from time to time by the fire of the *Téméraire*, *Britannia*, *Leviathan*, and *Conqueror*. Their loss was only forty-four killed and wounded.

There is curiously little known about the doings of the *Britannia*, the flagship of Nelson's rear-

admiral Lord Northesk. It is not even certain whether she was fourth, sixth, or twelfth in the line: but the French staff-captain Majendie places her fourth. She began by attacking the *Santisima Trinidad*, but seeing her totally dismasted she continued her course, "in order to break through the centre of the enemy's line, engaging on both sides in passing through their ships." Afterwards, as you will see, she helped to beat off the counter-attack of the French van. Her total loss was 52.

The *Leviathan* also began with the *Santisima*, and also left her when she saw the *Neptune* shoot away her masts. She passed on to the French *Neptune*, who though commanded by Maistrail, a captain of high reputation, went off before the wind and hauled up into Collingwood's battle. There, as you have already heard, she shot away the foremast and bowsprit of the *Belleisle*, after which she ran again, and arrived in Cadiz "perfect."

The *Conqueror* followed the *Leviathan*, but hauled up to the stern of the unhappy *Bucentaure*, and finished the *Victory's* work with her. In twenty-five minutes she brought down her main- and mizzen-masts, and immediately after, while engaging the *Santisima* with her other broadside, she shot away her foremast, and the French Commander-in-Chief hauled down his flag. Captain James Atcherley of the marines took possession of the *Bucentaure*, and brought off Villeneuve and his two captains in his boat; but the *Conqueror* had no time to wait for captured Admirals, and had gone to fight elsewhere. So the prisoners were taken on board the *Mars*. But they were really Nelson's prisoners, for the *Victory*

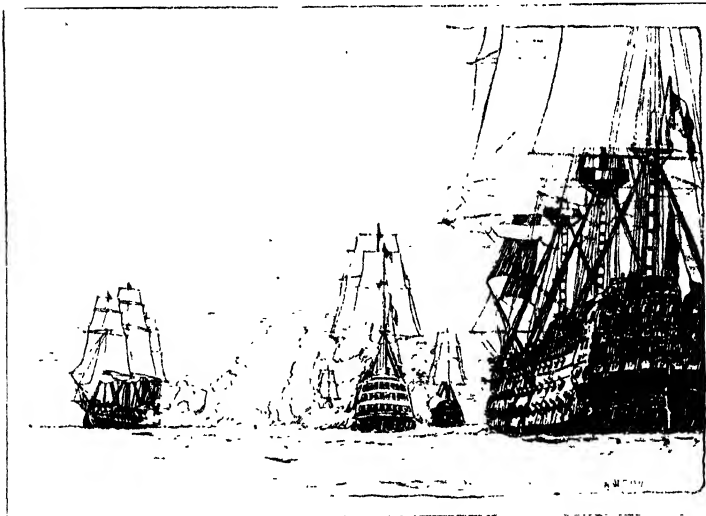
## 218 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

had killed the *Bucentaure* as she passed with a single blow.

The *Ajax* came up forty minutes after the *Victory*, engaging on both sides as she broke the line, but with what ships she does not say. She afterwards joined the *Britannia* in defending the prizes and beating off the French van. The *Agamemnon* opened fire an hour and ten minutes after the action commenced, and records that she "observed a Spanish four-decker (the *Santisima Trinidad*) which was engaged by the *Neptune*, *Conqueror*, and *Agamemnon*, lose her masts and strike her colours," but "was prevented from boarding her by four ships of the enemy's line that kept up a heavy fire upon us." Half an hour afterwards the *Agamemnon* "hailed a ship which we had engaged and struck. Told her to hoist English colours. Engaging the enemy's ships as most convenient." That phrase, "as most convenient," is delightful, and shows that the mid., who probably wrote it, knew his signal-book well.

Next comes the little *Africa*, one of only three 64's present that day, and she had the glory of going into action all by herself. She had lost her fleet in the night, and when day broke found herself some miles to the north. She headed accordingly for the *Victory* by the straightest line possible, and to do that she had to run the gauntlet of the whole of the enemy's van—ten ships all bigger than herself. She fired into them every one, and then "bore down to the assistance of the *Neptune*, engaging the *Santisima Trinidad*." Then when the big Spaniard struck she impudently "sent Lieutenant Smith with a party to take possession of her"—the smallest ship trying to

bag the biggest one. But on boarding the *Santisima* Lieutenant Smith was informed that she had not struck, and the Spanish officer bowed him back into his boat. The French van were coming to the rescue, and the *Africa* gallantly attacked the *Intrépide*, a 74, who killed and wounded 62 of her men and



"She had to run the gauntlet of the whole of the enemy's van"

nearly beat her altogether. She was saved by the *Orion*.

The *Orion* also played a singular part. By the time she got near the enemy, her captain, Codrington, saw that Nelson's first seven ships were beating the four they had enveloped, and the enemy's van was apparently out of action; the *Orion* therefore steered south for the lee division—the only English ship



## 220 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

who belonged to one column and went into action with the other. But after passing the *Santa Ana* ("dismasted and had struck") and "the *Royal Sovereign, Mars, Colossus, Tonnant*, aboard and surrounded by several of the enemy's ships, all dismasted or nearly so," she saw that Collingwood's battle was over, and crossed back again into Nelson's, where she found the *Victory* and *Téméraire* with their three French opponents "all in hot action." She then engaged the French van successfully, as you will see, with a loss of only twenty-four men.

### 6. THE FRENCH COUNTER-STROKE

The *Minotaur* and *Spartiate*, the last two ships of Nelson's division, had not yet come into action when the French Commander-in-Chief, before surrendering, made the signal to his ships in the van to take any position that would bring them most promptly under fire. Their difficulty had been, and still was, that they were lying almost becalmed, in the wind's eye, and could not get round. For a long time they had been uncertain what part of their line Nelson was going to attack, and that was one of the great advantages of his plan. It was not till about an hour and a half after the breaking of the line that they began to come round. If they had made up their minds to begin the movement earlier, or if they could have performed it more quickly, they might have made it far more difficult for Nelson's division to keep them from "interrupting" Collingwood.

It was about half-past three, according to the

*Euryalus*, that Hardy found it necessary to make the signal for Nelson's division—those of them who could move—to come to the wind and fend off the counter-stroke that was threatening. Collingwood, who was helpless himself, ordered the *Euryalus* to make the same signal to the *Minotaur*, *Spartiate*, and *Thunderer*. By this time the five nearest French and Spanish ships had come round—the *Héros*, *Intrépide*, *San Agustín*, *San Francisco de Asís*, and the three-decker *Rayo*—and they attacked at once, “bore down on us,” says the *Conqueror's* log, “and commenced a heavy fire. Three of our ships coming to our assistance (these were probably *Ajax*, *Agamemnon*, and *Britannia*), the enemy passed our starboard quarter. Bore up to assist the *Leviathan*, who was in close action with a Spanish two-decker *San Agustín*.” In a short time “the enemy's mizzen-mast went over the side. . . . the *Leviathan* boarded her and took possession of her.”

Seeing themselves defeated, some of these ships thought of escaping, and this they had a chance of doing, for they were on the leeward side of the battle. The *Héros* got off to Cadiz, with her captain dead and all her topmasts shot away. The *San Francisco de Asís* and *Rayo* also escaped for the time, but the one was wrecked, and the other captured by the *Leviathan* without a struggle two days afterwards. The *Intrépide* was gallantly attacked by the little *Africa*, whose fire she almost silenced. But help came in time. The *Orion* “opened fire on the stern of one of the enemy's ships endeavouring to make off from the ships opposed to her.” I think the *Orion* must have been mistaken in thinking Captain Infe-

## 222 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

met was trying to run. His own countrymen say that by this day's work he gained a place among the French seamen of immortal renown, having engaged two, three, four, or even five enemies at once. Certainly his surrender was inevitable. The *Leviathan* was giving him one of her broadsides, *Ajax* and *Agamemnon* were closing upon him, the *Africa* had been doing her best for three-quarters of an hour, and the *Orion* made short work. In less than a quarter of an hour she shot away all his masts, and sent Lieutenant Croft to take possession. The *Intrépide's* officers stated her loss at near 200 killed and wounded.

In the meantime the other five ships of the combined van got round with greater difficulty, the *Formidable* and one or two others being towed round by their own boats. They hauled to the wind, and came right down the line on the windward side. Admiral Dumanoir led in the *Formidable*, followed by the *Scipion*, *Mont Blanc*, *Duguay-Trouin*, and the Spanish *Neptuno*. They fired first at the *Conqueror*, and one shot killed two of her officers, First Lieutenant Lloyd and Third Lieutenant St. George, while St. George was in the act of congratulating Lloyd on his certainty of promotion. The *Victory* and *Téméraire* lay next in their path, for they kept out to windward to avoid the *Leviathan*, *Britannia*, and *Mars*, who were then in action with the first ships breaking away to leeward. In the opinion of the French staff, that was just what Admiral Dumanoir ought not to have done; he ought to have struck in to leeward to help his friends. Even now he might have done a smart thing, for on his starboard bow the *Minotaur*

and *Spartiate* were just coming up; he was in a position to cut them off before they could reach their fleet. He did not try: he passed between them and the battle, and contented himself with firing into the *Victory* and *Téméraire* on his way. He did them little harm, but by strange fortune injured their two prizes, the *Redoutable* and *Fougueux*. You may remember how Charles heard, at Gibraltar, that Dumanoir fired intentionally at his own friends to punish them for surrendering. We need not believe that; but he certainly was bent on getting away, for after another broadside at the *Royal Sovereign* he gave up and fled south towards the Straits, without even trying to pass round the rear and join his companions in Cadiz.

The *Minotaur* and *Spartiate* not only did their best to stop him, fighting him hard for half an hour, two against five, but when he got away they closed on his tail ship and captured her. "Observed the sternmost, a Spanish, ship's rigging and sails very much cut up. Lay to on her quarter, firing obliquely through her; she returning at times from her stern-chase and quarter guns." So says the *Spartiate's* log; and then after another half-hour, "wore, not being able to bring our guns to bear, to engage her on the other tack, the other four ships having left her." Twelve minutes more, and she had her mizzen-mast shot away; at last, two hours after the *Spartiate's* first attack, she struck, after having been very much disabled. She proved to be *El Neptuno*, 80 guns. The two English 74's who thus hunted in couples had been opponents at the Nile, where the *Minotaur* captured the *Spartiate*. At Trafalgar their losses

## 224 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

were very nearly equal—twenty-five for one and twenty-three for the other.

The double counter-stroke had failed; the battle was lost and won. The smoke was clearing away, but daylight was fading fast. Dumanoir and his four ships were disappearing to the southward: a ragged string were making north for Cadiz—the *Héros* and *Rayo* from the van, followed by the French *Neptune*, the *San Leandro*, and the *Montanez* from the centre, the *Principe de Asturias* and the *Pluton* from the rear. Fifty ships lay intermingled, half ruined and almost motionless upon the water. In the van the *Santisima Trinidad* was hoisting English colours; in the rear the French *Achille* was burning; in the centre Nelson lay dying. "Oh, Victory, Victory, how you distract my poor brain!" he exclaimed, when the wounded ship roared her last broadside at the flying van to windward. A few minutes afterwards he was gone, and the fighting ceased.

For an hour the twilight fell more rapidly, but the flames of the French *Achille* lit up the sky like a gigantic funeral fire. At half-past five she burnt to her powder-magazine and blew up. This, says Captain Harvey of the *Téméraire*, was "the most extraordinary and magnificent sight which can be conceived."

Silence and darkness followed; the Battle of Trafalgar was over.

### 7. THE DEATH OF NELSON

The story of Trafalgar is not only the story of our greatest battle, but the story of the death of our

greatest national hero. Of this we have a full and trustworthy account from Dr. Beatty, the surgeon of the *Victory*.

He begins by telling us that as the *Victory* drew near to the enemy, Lord Nelson, accompanied by Captain Hardy and the captains of the four frigates, who had been called on board by signal to receive instructions, visited the different decks of the ship. He addressed the crew at their several quarters, warning them against firing a single shot without being sure of their object, and he told the officers that he was highly satisfied with the arrangements they had made.

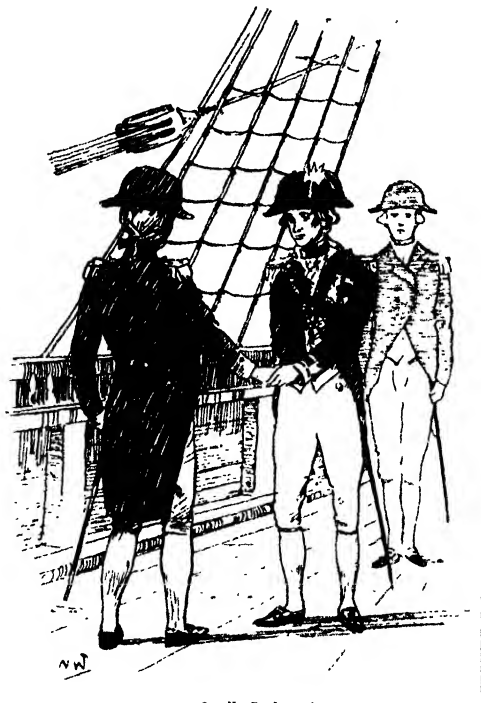
The officers themselves were not so well satisfied; they were anxious for the Admiral's safety, and began to talk to each other about it. At last the surgeon told the chaplain, Dr. Scott, how they feared the Admiral might be a mark for the enemy's sharpshooters, and how they wished that someone would ask him to cover up the stars on his coat. Dr. Scott and the Public Secretary (who was also named Scott) both replied to this that they were quite sure Lord Nelson would only be displeased by such a suggestion. Soon afterwards the surgeon was ordered below, and nothing was done.

When the enemy began to fire, Captain Blackwood, who was a favourite of Nelson's, did venture to speak to him. He proposed first that the Admiral should leave the *Victory* and hoist his flag in the *Euryalus* frigate, from which he could safely see all that was going on, and signal accordingly. This was a very reasonable plan, but was not at all the kind of plan for Nelson. "He would not hear of it, and gave

as his reason the force of example; and probably he was right." Captain Blackwood goes on to say that "my next object was to induce him to allow the *Téméraire*, *Neptune*, and *Leviathan* to lead into action before the *Victory*." He assured Nelson that Captain Hardy agreed with him in thinking it advantageous for the fleet that the Admiral should keep out of the battle as long as possible; and Nelson at last consented, as we have already seen, to allow the *Téméraire* to go ahead. But of course he never allowed her to do it; to be in the battle as soon as possible was what he himself wished. He knew what he was risking; he even knew what the end would be. When at last he found that the enemy's shot was passing over the *Victory*, he sent away his frigate captains with a message to the other ships of his division. Blackwood shook hands with him on the poop, and said: "I trust, my Lord, that on my return to the *Victory*, which will be as soon as possible, I shall find your Lordship well, and in possession of twenty prizes." Nelson replied to this: "God bless you, Blackwood; I shall never speak to you again."

At half-past one, about an hour after the *Victory* had run on board the *Redoubtable*, the Admiral was walking the middle of the quarter-deck with Captain Hardy. As he was almost standing still, in the act of turning from the hatchway towards the stern of the ship, a rifleman fired at him from the enemy's mizzen-top, not more than fifteen yards away. The ball struck the gold epaulette on his left shoulder, passed through the chest and spine, and lodged in the muscles of the back, towards the right side below the shoulder-blade. He fell with his face on the deck.

Secker, the sergeant-major of marines, and two seamen immediately raised him up, while Hardy, who was just a step ahead, turned round and asked if he was severely wounded. Nelson replied: "They have



"God bless you, Blackwood ; I shall never speak to you again "

done for me at last, Hardy." "I hope not," answered Hardy. "Yes," said Nelson, "my backbone is shot through."

Hardy then ordered the seamen to carry him



## 228 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

below to the surgeon. As they went Nelson saw that the tiller ropes had been shot away, and were not yet replaced. He ordered a midshipman to go up to Captain Hardy and remind him that this should be seen to at once. Then he took out his handkerchief and covered his face with it, so that the crew should not recognise him as he was carried past them.

When he was brought to the cockpit, several of the wounded called out to the surgeon: "Mr. Beatty, Lord Nelson is here. Mr. Beatty, the Admiral is wounded." The surgeon looked round—it was he himself who wrote the only account of all this—and saw the handkerchief fall from the wounded man's face; the stars on the coat were uncovered too—it was indeed Nelson. "Ah! Mr. Beatty, you can do nothing for me. I have but a short time to live; my back is shot through."

The surgeon said he hoped not. He then had him stripped and laid on a bed in one of the midshipmen's berths, and examined the wound. There was not much to be seen; but from the sensations which the wound caused, the gush of blood inside the breast, pain in the spine, and loss of feeling below, the surgeon knew that it was mortal. He told this to Dr. Scott, the chaplain, and his two assistant surgeons, and afterwards to Captain Hardy; but he concealed it from everyone else till after the victory was completed and announced to the Admiral.

The *Victory's* crew cheered from time to time when they saw an enemy's ship strike, and Nelson anxiously asked what the noise meant. Lieutenant Pasco, who lay near him, raised himself up and ex-

plained : this satisfied and pleased him. But he now felt a burning thirst, and kept asking to be fanned, and to be given drink. They fanned him with paper, and gave him lemonade and weak wine and water.

He became very anxious about the battle, and about the safety of his friend Hardy. He sent message after message, saying often, "Will no one bring Hardy to me? He must be killed : he is surely destroyed." Presently a message came back that the Captain would come at the first possible moment. Nelson heard this, and asked who was speaking. When they told him it was Mr. Bulkeley, the aide-de-camp, he said, "It is his voice"; and then to Bulkeley, "Remember me to your father."

At last, after an hour's waiting, Hardy came to him and took his hand. "Well, Hardy," he said, "how goes the battle? How goes the day with us?"

Hardy told him of the capture of twelve or fourteen ships. "I hope," said the Admiral, "none of *our* ships have struck, Hardy." "No, my Lord," replied Hardy, "there is no fear of that." Then Nelson said, "I am a dead man, Hardy. I am going fast : it will be all over with me soon. Come nearer to me. Pray let my dear Lady Hamilton have my hair, and all other things belonging to me." Hardy then pressed his hand again and went back on deck.

The Admiral now ordered the surgeon away to look to the other wounded, but sent for him again to say that all power of motion and feeling below his breast were gone. "And you," he said, "very well *know* I can live but a short time." He repeated, "*You know* I am gone"; and then at last poor Mr. Beatty broke down. "My Lord," he said, "unhappily

## 230 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

for our country, nothing can be done for you": and he turned away to hide his tears.

After another interval of an hour Hardy came down once more. He took Nelson's hand again, and held it while he congratulated him on his brilliant victory, which he said was now complete: it was impossible to see every ship distinctly, but he was certain of fourteen or fifteen having surrendered. The Admiral answered, "That is well, but I bargained for twenty"; and then, "Anchor, Hardy, anchor!"

"I suppose," said Hardy, "Admiral Collingwood will now take upon him the direction of affairs."

At this Nelson tried to raise himself from the bed. "Not while I live, I hope," he exclaimed. "No! do *you* anchor, Hardy."

He then said he felt that in a few minutes he should be no more, and added in a low tone, "Don't throw me overboard, Hardy." When Hardy had promised this he said, "Take care of my dear Lady Hamilton, Hardy. Take care of poor Lady Hamilton. Kiss me, Hardy": and when Hardy had knelt down and kissed him, he said, "Now I am satisfied. Thank God, I have done my duty." Hardy kissed him once more, and left him for the last time.

For a few minutes the dying Admiral kept repeating more and more painfully, "Thank God, I have done my duty." Then the last broadsides of the battle were heard, as the four ships of the French van made their escape to windward of the English fleet. "Partial firing," says the *Victory's* log, "continued until 4.30, when a victory having been reported to the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Nelson, K.B. and Commander-in-Chief, he then died of his wound."

## THE ADVENTURES OF EDWARD PELLEW

### 1. "HE NEVER THOUGHT TWICE ABOUT IT"

EDWARD PELLEW was born at Dover on April 19th, 1757. His father belonged to a Cornish family, but was then in command of a post-office packet or cross-Channel boat, on the Dover and Calais line. Before Edward was eight years old his father died, and his mother went back to Cornwall; he himself was sent to school at Truro, and seems to have done pretty well with books—at any rate he got as far as Vergil. But he was born to be a man of action, one of the most brilliant and successful of his time: not among the great commanders, like Jervis, Hood, and Nelson, but a first-rate fighting man, always more full of life than anyone near him, either on his own side or the enemy's. His peculiar characteristic was that he never hesitated; his blood was always up, and his first impulse always right. "I never had a second thought that was worth sixpence," he once said. In the best days of the Navy, no man was ever more brave or more generous than Edward Pellew.

He showed this from a very early age. Once, when he was not yet twelve, he went alone into a burning house and brought out a quantity of gunpowder, which everyone else was afraid to approach.

## 232 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

When he was thirteen he was a prominent fighter at school, and was to be flogged for it: whereupon he ran away, and insisted on going to sea instead. Accordingly at thirteen and a half he was entered in the Navy, under Captain Stott of the *Juno*. When Stott was transferred to the *Alarm*, he took Edward with him to the Mediterranean, and there a most extraordinary thing happened. Captain Stott, in circumstances very disgraceful to himself, lost his temper and struck a midshipman named Frank Cole. The boy at once very properly applied to be discharged from the ship, and the captain ordered a boat to take him ashore. Edward instantly went to him and said, "If Frank Cole is to be turned out of the ship, I hope, sir, you will turn me out too." He did; and the two boys would have been landed in a foreign country without any money, if two of the lieutenants, Keppel and Lord Hugh Seymour, had not helped them. At Marseilles the captain of a merchantman, who knew the Pellews, offered to take Edward as far as Lisbon, but said he had no room for Cole. However, he was no match for two mids. of that character, who were determined to stand by each other, and it ended in his agreeing to take them both. From Lisbon they reached Falmouth in a packet boat. The rest of the story is equally characteristic of the English sailor. Twelve years afterwards, when Edward Pellew was a post-captain commanding the *Winchelsea*, he took under his protection a son of Captain Stott (who was then dead), and did everything he could to help him; so he may be said to have won handsomely on both innings.

He was next appointed to the *Blonde*, under

Captain Pownoll, a first-rate officer who had been trained by Admiral Boscawen, and who in his turn was the making of Pellew. He had the very best material to work on, for Edward was "the smartest



"On the yardarm standing on his head"

and most fearless boy in the ship. This will show you what he was like. When General Burgoyne came on board the *Blonde* to sail for America, the yards were manned in his honour. As he looked up he

## 234 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

was astonished to see one mid. on the yardarm standing on his head. Captain Pownoll told him not to be alarmed, for it was only one of Pellew's usual frolics, and even if he fell he would only dive under the ship and come up on the other side. He was quite right: for Edward actually did once dive from the fore-yard of the *Blonde*, as she was going fast through the water, and succeeded in saving a man who had fallen overboard. Captain Pownoll reproached him for his rashness, but he loved him for it.

In the war of the American Revolution, Edward was sent ashore with another midshipman named Brown, under Lieutenant Dacres of the *Blonde*, to help in the defence of Canada. They were employed to build and equip a flotilla on Lake George, where a dockyard was set up under Lieutenant Schank, and a 300-ton ship called the *Inflexible* was built in a few weeks: "trees growing in the forest in the morning would form part of the ship before night." They had also two schooners, the *Maria* and the *Carleton*, and a kind of raft, the *Thunder*, carrying twelve heavy guns and two howitzers. When they sailed against the enemy, Dacres, Pellew, and Brown were appointed to the *Carleton*. Being nearest she attacked at once, but owing to the state of the wind the other ships could not get up to support her, and she suffered very severely. Brown lost an arm at once, and Dacres fell senseless. Edward took command, and in obedience to a signal of recall, brought the *Carleton* out of action. She was close to the shore, and under fire from the enemy's marksmen; seeing that she was not coming round, Edward himself ran out on the bowsprit and pushed the jib over. The marksmen

all missed him, but when the boats took the *Carleton* in tow a shot cut the tow-rope; again, seeing everyone hesitate, he went forward and repaired it himself. The action was successful, for the enemy lost a 12-gun schooner, burnt, and a 3-gun gondola sunk; and two days afterwards the rest of their flotilla was again defeated and destroyed. This result was important to the army in the land campaign, and the *Carleton* got great credit for it. Dacres was sent home with despatches, promoted, and received in audience by the King. Edward, who was only eighteen, was given command of the *Carleton*, and received three letters—from his senior officer, Sir Charles Douglas; from Lord Howe, the Commander-in-Chief; and from Lord Sandwich, the First Lord of the Admiralty, all promising him promotion as soon as he came home.

Edward afterwards accompanied General Burgoyne's army in the advance on Saratoga and in the retreat to Fort George, building bridges for them and acting as pioneer. When their provision store-ship in the river was captured by the enemy, it was Pellew at the head of his sailors who recaptured it. For this he was specially thanked by the general, who also summoned him to attend his council of war, where he was by far the youngest officer present.

After Burgoyne's surrender, he was sent home with despatches and a warm recommendation from Sir Guy Carleton. He sailed in a transport, which was chased by an enemy's cruiser. The senior military officer on board assumed the command; but Pellew at once told him that as the only naval officer present he insisted on fighting the ship himself. He had his



## 236. THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

own way, engaged the privateer, and beat her off: came home in safety, and was immediately promoted.

### 2. A CAPTAIN AND HIS ORDERS

Edward was now twenty-one, a fine seaman, and a man of extraordinary physique and daring. He would sometimes go out in a boat alone, and upset her on purpose by carrying too great a press of sail. In doing this in Portsmouth harbour he was once very nearly drowned. Another time when he was going by himself from Falmouth to Plymouth in a small punt, his hat blew overboard; he fastened the tiller a-lee, undressed, and jumped into the water. As he was returning, with his hat, the boat began sailing on her own account, and ran some distance before she came up in the wind. He had almost reached her when she filled again; and he was thus baffled three or four times, till he was so exhausted that when at last he caught hold of the rudder it was a considerable time before he had strength to get into the boat. As for his promotion, that was a bitter disappointment, for he was appointed to a guardship. He wrote again and again to Lord Sandwich, and at last even dared to tackle him in the street, taking his commission out of his pocket and begging to be allowed to return it and get the command of a privateer rather than remain inactive while the war was going on. Lord Sandwich smiled, made him pocket his commission again, and soon afterwards appointed him to the *Licorne*. A few months later he was transferred to the *Apollo*, a

frigate commanded by his old friend Captain Pownoll, who made Edward his First Lieutenant.

On June 15th, 1780, the *Apollo*, cruising in the North Sea with other ships, was ordered away in pursuit of a cutter. During the chase she sighted a French frigate, the *Stanislaus*, and at once brought her to action, though she tried hard to escape to the neutral port of Ostend. After an hour's fighting Captain Pownoll fell, shot through the body. He died immediately in Edward's arms, only saying, "Pellow, I know you won't give his Majesty's ship away." After another hour the *Stanislaus* was beaten, dismasted, and driven ashore, but she claimed the protection of the neutral port, and so avoided surrendering. She was eventually got off, and sold in Ostend; the British Government bought her and added her to the Navy.

Edward looked upon this as a failure, and thought himself ruined; but three days later Lord Sandwich wrote to condole with him on his captain's death, and to promise him promotion for his "gallant and officer-like conduct." He was made Commander of the *Hazard* sloop: then transferred to the *Pelican*, a vessel so small that he declared his servant could dress his hair from the deck while he sat in the cabin! But his ship mattered little, for he always took all his chances. He sailed in the little *Pelican* on 20th April 1782, and came back next day with a captured French privateer. He sailed again on the 24th for the coast of France, and immediately attacked a brig, a lugger, and another vessel, of ten or twelve guns each, in Bass Roads, beat them and ran them on shore under a battery, with which he then exchanged

## 288 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

fire. He got out of the harbour with only two men wounded, and the Admiralty were so impressed by his skill and daring that they made him a post-captain within a month afterwards.

He was appointed to command the 40-gun frigate *Artois*, in the temporary absence of her own captain. He sailed on the 6th of June, and on the 1st of July fell in with a French frigate-built sloop, the *Prince of Robigo*, of 22 guns and 180 men. Of course she was no match for the *Artois*, but she gave her a four hours' chase, and half-an-hour's running fight with the chase guns before she surrendered. Shortly after this peace was declared, and Pellew was ashore for four years, during which he married.

In 1786 he went to sea again in command of the *Winchelsea*, and was ordered to the Newfoundland station. Having no fighting to do, he devoted himself to training his officers and men, always setting them an example of energy and daring. On one occasion, when a gale was blowing up after eight o'clock at night, and it was necessary to shorten sail quickly, there was much difficulty in close-reefing the main topsail. Even the boldest and most active top-men, when they reached the topsail-yard, hesitated to go out upon it in the dark with the sail flapping violently. Then a voice was heard from the extreme end of the yard-arm, calling to them above the roaring of the gale to do their best to save the sail from beating itself to pieces. One man exclaimed: "Why, that's the captain. How the blank did he get there?" The fact was that the instant he had ordered the men aloft, "he had laid down his speaking-trumpet and clambered like a cat by the rigging, over the backs

of the seamen, and before they reached the main-top he was at the topmast-head, and from thence by the topsail-lift, a single rope, he reached the situation he was in."

Another time, when the ship had to be warped up to her anchorage at St. John's, and the boats were all hard at work, it became necessary to cast off the hawser from a rock to which it had been made fast. The captain called to the forecastle for a man to climb down the hawser itself, cast it off, and wait for a boat to bring him on board again. The smartest seamen in the ship all shirked such a risk. "In an instant the captain was seen clinging to the hawser, and proceeding to the rock; the hawser was cast off, and to the astonishment of everyone, he swung himself to the side of the ship by the same means, mounted the ship's side, and was again directing the duty going on." The men used to say of him: "Well, he never orders us to do what he won't do himself"; and nothing better can be said of an officer by his men, in any service.

In 1787, when he was sent out again to Newfoundland, he gave a most amusing illustration of the rule, "duty before dignity." On the 4th of June, being the King's birthday, and a very hot day, the ship's company asked leave to bathe. The ship was at anchor in St. John's harbour; the captain, who was engaged to dine on shore with the Governor, had come up on deck in his full-dress uniform, and was waiting to step into his barge. As he watched the men larking in the water, he heard a lad standing close to him, an officer's servant, speak rather braggingly of how he would "have a good swim by and by,

too." "The sooner the better," said the captain, and tipped him over the ship's side into the water. Then he saw in an instant that the lad could not swim, and feeling himself in the wrong he would not leave it to anyone else to put things right. Overboard he went



"Overboard he went himself in full dress"

himself in full dress, with a rope in one hand, and in a moment the lad was on deck again, more frightened than hurt. One of the eye-witnesses said that if ever Captain Pellew was frightened it was when he saw that lad struggling in the water; but he enjoyed the laugh against himself afterwards. I suppose he had

to dine in his No. 2 uniform, and I am quite sure he told the story to the Governor and all his guests.

### 3. THE FIRST FIGHT OF THE WAR

When he came home for the second time from Newfoundland, Edward Pellew was again on the beach for some years. He tried farming in Cornwall, and was tempted to go and serve in the Russian Navy. Happily he refused, for very soon afterwards the French, having beheaded their king, suddenly declared war against England. The navy had then, on a peace footing, only 16,000 men; 60,000 more had to be raised in the course of the year 1793. Captain Pellew at once offered his services, and was given the *Nymphé*, a 36-gun frigate captured from the French in the late war. He had the greatest difficulty in manning her, and had to sail from Spithead to Falmouth with a crew of twelve seamen and eighty Cornish miners—the officers themselves had to go aloft and set and furl the sails.

In May the *Nymphé* sailed in company with the frigate *Venus*, with a scanty crew who had never seen a shot fired. The two ships parted, and on the 27th the *Venus* engaged *La Semillante*, one of a squadron of French cruisers under Captain Mullan, of the *Cléopatra*. After two hours the *Cléopatra* came up, and the *Venus* had to retreat. On the 29th she found the *Nymphé* again, and the two frigates went in search of the enemy together. During this search they touched at Falmouth, where the *Nymphé* pressed some more men, and took on

## 242 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

board Commander Israel Pellew, Edward's younger brother, as a guest or volunteer.

The search was continued by the *Nymphe* alone in mid-Channel, and everyone on board became very keen about it. They talked incessantly of it, and two of them had very remarkable dreams. Mr. Pearse, a master's mate who had been in the *Winchelsea*, dreamed "that the *Nymphe* fell in with a French frigate the day after leaving port, that they killed her captain and took her." This he believed to be a supernatural warning, and when he was killed in the action which followed, his messmates found that he had recorded the dream in his pocket-book.

Israel Pellew's story is even more remarkable. He was asleep when the *Cléopatra* was at last sighted, in the early morning, and his brother would not allow him to be called until the ships were almost on the point of closing. When he ran up on deck half-dressed, Edward said to him, "Israel, you have no business here, and I am very sorry I brought you from your home. We are too many of us." But Israel exclaimed, "That's the very frigate I have been dreaming of all night! I dreamt we shot away her wheel! We shall have her in a quarter of an hour!"—to which Edward replied, "We shall not take her so easily: see how she is handled."

Israel followed up his dream by taking charge of the after main-deck guns, and aiming one of them himself. But the action took a little longer than he had foreseen. At six o'clock the two captains hailed each other courteously, hat in hand; the crew of the *Nymphe* then gave three cheers for King George, while Captain Mullan waved a red woollen cap of

Liberty before his men and made them a little speech. They cried, "Vive la République," and one of them went aloft and fastened the cap of Liberty to the masthead. At 6.15 the *Nymphe* reached the starboard quarter of the *Cléopatra*, and Captain Pellew gave the signal to fire, as previously arranged, by putting his hat on his head. For nearly three-quarters of an hour the two ships ran side by side before the wind, blazing furiously into each other at close quarters. Just before seven o'clock the *Cléopatra's* mizzen-mast came down, and as the *Nymphe* drew ahead Israel Pellew got his chance. He shot away the Frenchman's wheel immediately, she became unmanageable, and came round with her bow to the *Nymphe's* broadside, jib-boom pressing hard against the main-mast. The French did not board, so the English did, and by ten minutes past seven they had driven the *Cléopatra's* crew below and hauled down her pendant.

So fell the *Cléopatra*, "the crack ship of France," as Edward Pellew himself called her; she had, he says, "40 guns, 28 on her main-deck and 12 on her quarter-deck, some of 36 pounds, and 320 men. We dished her up in fifty minutes." The *Nymphe*, out of a crew of only 240, had 23 killed, including her boatswain, a master's mate (Mr. Pearse), and three midshipmen; and 27 wounded, including the Second Lieutenant, the Lieutenant of Marines, and two midshipmen. The *Cléopatra* had 63 killed and wounded, out of her 320; so that her crew were still 67 men to the good when they surrendered.

But they had lost their brave Captain Mullan. A round-shot struck him on the back and left hip; even then he remembered that he ought to destroy the



## 244 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

code of signals in his pocket, but he took out his commission by mistake, and died in the act of devouring it with his teeth—an undefeated hero of duty, if ever there was one.

This was considered a most important success, for it was the first capture of the war. "I never doubted," said Lord Howe, "that you would take a French frigate, but the manner in which you have done it will establish an example for the war." Accordingly the Earl of Chatham, as First Lord of the Admiralty, presented the brothers Pellew to his Majesty; Edward was knighted and Israel made a post-captain. Edward ended the adventure in his own way; he buried Captain Mullon at Portsmouth with all honours, and sent to his widow not only her husband's captured property, but all the money he could spare of his own.

### 4. THE FLYING SQUADRON

Towards the end of this year, 1793, the French began a very troublesome system of cruising at the mouth of the Channel with frigates in small squadrons. Sir Edward Pellew said that the best way to check them was by sending out a stronger squadron of cruisers, independent of any of the fleets. This was unusual; but he got Sir John Borlase Warren, a very influential officer, to make an application to the Admiralty, and they agreed to give Sir John five good frigates—the *Flora*, *Arethusa*, *Concorde*, *Melampus*, and *Nymphe*. Sir Edward Pellew went with him, not in the *Nymphe*, but in the *Arethusa*.

They sailed in the middle of April 1794, and at day-

break on the 23rd fell in with a French squadron off the Isle de Bass. The French Commodore's flag was in the frigate *L'Engageante*, then came the *Resolue*, then the *Pomone*, and last the 22-gun corvette *Babet*; only four to five, but a very powerful squadron: the *Pomone* was then the largest frigate ever yet built, being only 100 tons smaller than a ship of the line, and carrying long 24-pounders on her main-deck.

The battle was a most brilliant little affair. The *Flora*, Sir John's flagship, outsailed her consorts, gave the *Babet* a broadside, and passed on to attack the magnificent *Pomone*, though of course with her 18-pounders she was no match for her. The Frenchman soon cut her sails and rigging to pieces, shot away her fore topmast, and left her astern. She also with her big guns gave the *Melampus* a bad hammering at long range. Then came the *Arethusa*, the saucy *Arethusa*. She had been cannonading the *Babet*, but she now left her, half-beaten, to be taken by the *Flora*, and went straight for the *Pomone* single-handed. She engaged within pistol shot, and no one knows why she was not destroyed. But by half-past nine she had shot away the *Pomone's* main- and mizzen-masts, and compelled her to strike.

The signal was then made for a general chase. But the *Flora* and *Arethusa* were both rather crippled, and the *Nymphé* had been far behind from the start. The *Concorde* alone went on after the two remaining enemy's ships; her captain was Sir Richard Strachan, who afterwards captured the four French ships which escaped from Trafalgar under Admiral Dumanoir. She first overhauled the *Resolue*; then the French Commodore came to the rescue in *L'Engageante*,

## 246 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

and Sir Richard at once attacked and captured him.\* The *Resolute* in the meantime escaped, but the *Melampus* had the consolation of taking her some time later. For his share in this complete victory Sir Edward Pellew received thanks and congratulatory letters from Lord Chatham and Lord Howe; and as the frigate squadron had proved so successful in clearing the Channel the Admiralty now commissioned a second squadron, and gave him the command of it. This also did good service, and made some captures, but the *Arethusa* herself got no fighting.

At the end of January 1795, Sir Edward was appointed to the *Indefatigable*. She was what was called "rasé"; that is to say, she had been a 64-gun ship, and was now cut down to make a large and heavy frigate. She was at first a very slow ship, but her new captain, by altering her ballast and hold, soon made her into an excellent sailer. She weighed on March 2nd, and immediately captured sixteen ships out of a convoy of twenty-five which had taken shelter among the rocks of the Penmarcks.

On May 27th, while chasing an enemy's ship, she ran on a sunken rock off Cape Finisterre. Sir Edward lost not a moment; he shifted some of the main-deck guns and ordered the whole ship's company to "sally" her off the rock by charging across the deck. She fell over heavily and came off into deep water, but with five feet of water in her hold. With constant pumping she reached Lisbon in three days, but the crew were worn out, and a gang of Portuguese were got on board to go on with the pumping. The next day, being a Saint's day, they struck work and the ship began to settle down; but Sir Edward rushed out

in his dressing-gown with a drawn sword, chased the Portuguese all round the gangways and made them go back to the pumps. Then in order to see how much damage had been done he determined to examine the ship's bottom himself: to the astonishment and admiration of everyone he dived down, thoroughly examined the leak, and satisfied himself that only the starboard side was injured. When the *Indefatigable* was at last docked at Plymouth his report was found to have been entirely correct.

In the same year he three times risked his life to save others. But his most famous act of this kind was in the following January, while his ship was lying in Hamoaze. A large transport, the *Dutton*, with part of the 2nd Regiment (the Queen's) on board, bound for the West Indies, was driven into Plymouth by bad weather and ran aground under the citadel. There she lay broadside on to the heavy sea, and at the second roll she threw all her masts overboard at once.

Sir Edward was driving out to dinner when he heard the news; he ran to the shore and found that the principal officers of the transport had just got on shore, leaving the other five or six hundred men on board to their fate. Neither they nor any of the local pilots would attempt to board the ship for any reward that could be offered. "Then I will go myself," said Sir Edward. He was hauled on board the *Dutton* by a single rope, and badly hurt by being dragged under the fallen main-mast, but he reached the deck and took command. He promised at once that he would be the last to quit the ship, also that he would save everyone who obeyed him and run through anyone who disobeyed him; at which the

## 248 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

men gave him three cheers. Two hawsers were got ready, and as soon as a boat could be brought alongside they were taken out and made fast on shore. Upon them Sir Edward fitted a travelling cradle which was slung very carefully to and from the shore with great labour. Some of the passengers were landed by this, and others in a cutter and two other boats from the dockyard. The women and children were sent first, and Sir Edward stood guard with drawn sword—a very necessary precaution, for many of the soldiers were drunk. In the end everyone was saved, Sir Edward last, and immediately afterwards the ship went to pieces.

This was a great public service, and it gained for Sir Edward a popularity which astonished him. The corporation presented him with the freedom of Plymouth; the merchants of Liverpool gave him a valuable service of plate; the king made him a baronet, and added a stranded ship for his crest. But as usual he had his own way of taking these things; the reward he gave himself was to obtain a commission in the Navy for Mr. Coghlan, the young mate who had brought the first boat alongside the wreck, and to offer him a place in the *Indefatigable*, where he became a distinguished officer.

The *Indefatigable* sailed again on March 9th with the *Révolutionnaire*, *Argo*, *Amázon*, and *Concorde*. On the 21st a corvette was driven on shore, and on April 13th the frigate *L'Unité* was captured. On the 20th, while the squadron was lying-to off the Lizard, a large ship was sighted which did not answer the private signal. Sir Edward immediately ordered the *Argo* and *Révolutionnaire* to take the prize, *L'Unité*,

into port, and the others to follow him in chase. Towards evening he had left them quite astern, for the enemy he was after was the *Virginie*, one of the



“Coming down on the splinter netting”

fastest 40-gun frigates in the French service, commanded by Captain Bergeret, a first-rate seaman.

The wind was off the land, and the *Virginie* soon found that she would be overhauled before she could make the French coast; she therefore bore away south. But the *Indefatigable* crowded on sail and

## 250 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

gained steadily; by midnight she was within gunshot, after running 168 miles in fifteen hours. There was light enough to fight by, and the firing began at once under full sail. In spite of the heavier metal of the *Indefatigable* she found it a long and doubtful business. Her mizzen-topmast was shot away, and fell on to the mainyard, finally coming down on the splinter netting directly over Sir Edward's head. The foreyard and gaff were also destroyed, and much rigging injured.

But the *Virginie* had suffered much worse. Some of the *Indefatigable's* big shot had gone clean through her and out below the water-line; she had four feet of water in her hold. One shot had killed seven men at a single gun; another cut away her main-topmast, and then her mizzen-mast went by the board. But when the *Indefatigable* shot past her, being unable to shorten sail at once, she made a gallant attempt to rake her, and nearly succeeded.

But now the other frigates were coming up, and all hope was gone. The *Virginie* fired a lee gun, and hauled down her light. When the *Concorde* hailed her she replied, "We must surrender; there are so many of you; we strike to the frigate ahead." Weeping bitterly, Captain Bergeret was brought on board the *Indefatigable*. He asked her captain's name, and when they told him "Sir Edward Pellew," he exclaimed, "Oh! that is the most fortunate man that ever lived! He takes everything; and now he has taken the finest frigate in France."

Since it was his fate to be captured, Captain Bergeret too was fortunate in falling to so chivalrous an enemy. Sir Edward at once took him home

to stay with his own family, and an offer was made to exchange him for Sir Sidney Smith. The French refused; but when Sir Sidney Smith escaped two years afterwards, the British Government sent Bergeret home unconditionally. I do not know whether it was Sir Edward who suggested this; it was exactly like him to do it, but happily it was also exactly like many others of his generation.

#### 5. HONOURS WITHOUT ASKING

In 1796 the French Government, having made an alliance with Spain and Holland, decided to strike a heavy blow at Great Britain by sending a fleet and army to invade Ireland. They had the good fortune to escape all our fleets and reach Bantry Bay on November 21st with seventeen of the line, thirteen frigates, and fourteen transports. But the weather, which hampered the English plans, was altogether too much for theirs. Half of their ships were blown out to sea before anchoring, and the other half dragged their anchors two days afterwards with disastrous consequences. The *Resolue* frigate was dismasted in collision; the *Tortue*, with two corvettes and four transports, was taken. Another transport foundered in the bay, and two other frigates were wrecked on shore. Most of the others got back to Brest.

But there was one more which did not—the line-of-battle ship *Droits de l'Homme*, the flagship of Rear-Admiral Bouvet, with General Humbert and a thousand troops on board. Sir Edward Pellew, who had rendered invaluable scouting service all through



## 252 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE. SEA

this time, fell in with her on the 13th of January 1797 while cruising in company with the *Amazon*, about twenty-five leagues from Brest.

The two frigates at once raced to cut her off. The wind increased to a gale, and at half-past four they had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy carry away her fore- and main-topmasts in a heavy squall. At a quarter to six the *Indefatigable* came up with her and gave her a broadside, crossing her stern so close that some of the frigate's men were able to grab the French ensign and tear it away. The *Droits de l'Homme* replied with her stern upper-deck guns, and with tremendous volleys from the troops on board, which seem to have done no harm at all.

This fight of frigate against two-decker went on for an hour. Then the *Amazon* came up and poured a broadside into the enemy's quarter. Three-quarters of an hour after this the *Indefatigable* had to repair her rigging, so both frigates shot ahead. At eight they returned, placed themselves one on each bow of the enemy, and raked her alternately, the two-decker trying in vain to close or bring her guns to bear. At half-past ten the frigates shot away her mizzen-mast, then changed their position and attacked her on both quarters.

They too were suffering severely; the sea was tremendous, and on the main deck of the *Indefatigable* the guns' crews were often in water to the waist. Some of the guns had to be unloaded and recharged; some broke their breechings or wrenched their bolts. The *Amazon* was even worse off; her masts and rigging were much injured, her mizzen-topmast, gaff, spanker-boom and maintopsail-yard shot away, and





she had three feet of water in her hold. Fortunately the losses in men were wonderfully few; the *Amazon* had three killed and fifteen wounded, and the *Indefatigable* only nineteen wounded. The enemy had already a hundred killed and many wounded.

After eleven hours' fighting the frigates sighted land dangerously near, and sheered off. The enemy promptly gave the *Indefatigable* a parting broadside, which wounded all her masts and nearly cut away her main-topmast. But she was saved by sheer seamanship, like the *Menelaus* on a similar occasion. She stood to the south, till she saw breakers on the lee bow, then wore and stood north, then south again. This time she saw the *Droits de l'Homme* lying on her broadside in the surf, only a mile away, but of course out of reach. She bent new sails and mended her rigging, and at eleven o'clock passed clear of the Penmarcks,—safe, but with six feet of water in her hold and her men dead beat.

The *Amazon* grounded about ten minutes after she ceased firing. Her crew, under perfect discipline, built rafts and landed without losing more than six men. Those six stole a boat, put off, and were drowned. The rest were made prisoners, but were well treated and were soon exchanged.

The *Droits de l'Homme*, with 1600 men on board, as well as 55 English prisoners lately captured, was slowly beaten to pieces by the waves, and took four days in dying. On the second day an English captain and eight other prisoners escaped in a boat and landed safely; but the French showed little discipline or judgment. On the third day they made an attempt to send away the women in a boat, but

## 254 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

all rushed for it, and 120 were drowned. When the fourth night came 900 had already perished. Next day a brig succeeded in saving 150, but 200 more were lost; and of 380 left on board that night one half were found dead next morning. Among the few survivors were Commodore Lacrosse, the Captain of the ship, and General Humbert; also three British infantry officers, who were at once sent to England by the French Government, in consideration of the help they had given in this terrible disaster.

In the course of the year 1798 Sir Edward's squadron captured fifteen cruisers. In 1799 he was appointed to the *Impetueux*, in Lord Bridport's fleet of twenty-six of the line. The crews of this fleet plotted to mutiny at the end of May; but the outbreak, which was to have begun in the *Impetueux*, was nipped in the bud by Sir Edward's courage and promptness. The ship then joined in combined operations in Quiberon Bay and at Ferrol, until the short peace of 1801.

During this peace Sir Edward became Member of Parliament for Barnstaple, but he only sat until March 1803, when he was appointed to the 80-gun ship *Tonnant*, and joined the Channel Fleet. In 1804 he was promoted to the rank of Rear-Admiral of the White (a double promotion), and appointed to be Commander-in-Chief in India. He hoisted his flag in the *Blenheim*, and sailed in the spring of 1805. He therefore missed his chance of being at Trafalgar; but his brother Israel was there as Captain of the *Conqueror*, and went into action with the *Victory* and *Téméraire*.

The *Blenheim* was attacked on her voyage out by

the *Marengo* and *Belle Poule* under Admiral Linois, of whom you have heard in the Adventures of John Franklin; but she beat them both off and reached India safely in August. Sir Edward's chief business for the next three years was the protection of British commerce, and he was so successful that during his command the rate of insurance fell by 50 per cent.

He came home in 1809, and in the following year commanded in chief in the North Sea. Then in the spring of 1811 he was appointed to the Mediterranean, at that time the most important station of all. It included in reality a number of stations—Malta, Gibraltar, and the coasts of Italy and Spain—but the chief part of the work was the blockade of the great French fleet in Toulon. For this purpose he based his main fleet on Port Mahon, and kept a small in-shore squadron of battleships nearer Toulon, with a service of cruisers patrolling the entrance of the Roads—"polishing Cape Sicio" the men called it, as they sailed wearily backwards and forwards, like a policeman on his beat. But the work was splendidly done, and now and then there would be a bit of a skirmish. Sir Edward, being himself a born frigate captain, was very proud of his frigates, and some of them particularly distinguished themselves—he specially mentioned the *Volontaire* and *Perlen*, and the *Menelaus*. It was also largely owing to his influence that "along the shores of Italy and France the most daring and brilliant enterprises were continually achieved. Batteries and forts were stormed, and prizes carried off from anchorages where they might justly have deemed themselves unassailable." In

## 256 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

these too, as you have already seen, the *Menelaus* had her share.

Sir Edward held this command until the end of the war, and he was still in the Mediterranean when the list of honours was published. Several of the Peninsular generals were made peers; and one admiral: the admiral chosen—without his knowledge or consent—was Sir Edward Pellew. He first saw the announcement in a newspaper. "I was never more surprised," he says. "Never was man more ignorant of its being thought of."

He was now Lord Exmouth, and shortly afterwards, to his renewed astonishment, a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath. He took an active part in the short campaign of 1815, when Napoleon escaped from Elba; and then expected to come home, but was ordered to remain in the Mediterranean to await instructions. The great war was over; the Service was being disbanded; but for Edward Pellew there was one adventure left—to command in the last battle of the old British Navy.

### 6. A NEST OF PIRATES

This was not against a civilised power, nor in defence of his own country: it was a fight to free the South of Europe from the cruelty of the North African States on the Barbary coast. For years past these pirates—the worst among them were the Algerines—had from time to time attacked ships of all nations and made slaves of their prisoners, whom they kept in heavy iron chains, and flogged and worked without mercy. They at first listened to reason, and

set free some 1800 slaves, but shortly afterwards they treacherously massacred a whole fleet of Italian coral-fishers, and the British Government decided that the Dey of Algiers, having made himself the enemy of the whole civilised world, must be brought to complete and final submission, or to the punishment his crimes deserved. They accordingly appointed Lord Exmouth to carry out this decision, and placed at his disposal whatever force he should think necessary for the purpose. To their amazement he asked for only five ships of the line and some frigates. The fortifications of Algiers were known to be immensely strong; it was remembered that when they were described to Nelson he had said that it would take five and twenty of the line to attack them successfully. As a matter of fact there was not room for twenty-five ships to attack at once, and Nelson was only speaking in a general way of the risk of facing five hundred guns in stone-built batteries. Lord Exmouth was quite aware of that risk, but he had better information to go upon, for he had sent a naval officer, Captain Warde, to enter the harbour and survey the anchorage and the defences. This Captain Warde did with the greatest skill and secrecy: the sketch plan which he drew was found to be so accurate that Lord Exmouth sent it home to the Admiralty after the battle, to illustrate his own despatches. From this plan, and from an account written by Lord Exmouth's interpreter, an Egyptian named Abraham Salamé, it is possible to get a fairly clear idea of what Algiers looked like from the deck of a ship coming in to attack it.

You must imagine that as you enter the bay from



## 258 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

the north, you see a white Oriental town lying on the slope of the hill on your starboard side. The town is shaped like a triangle; the walls which form the two sides of the triangle run from the water's edge right up the hill and meet in a big fort at the top. The base of the triangle is the sea-front, a mile long; it is not quite straight, but makes an outward bulge when you have gone about one-third of the way along it from the right. From this bulge a stone pier juts out, straight away from the town, for three hundred yards; and across the end of the pier runs a still longer Mole or breakwater. Looked at from the town the pier and Mole make a gigantic T, but, of course to us the T is upside down. The right-hand end of the Mole, as we look at it, has an enormous battery upon it, and behind that a lighthouse, and a still larger battery; the left-hand end curves round towards the town so as to enclose a harbour, the entrance to which is 120 yards wide.

All the works round this harbour are covered with the strongest fortifications. The lighthouse battery mounts more than fifty guns, in three tiers—as many as the broadside of a three-decker; only the guns are heavier, and the sides of this three-decker are of solid stone. The battery at the right end of the Mole has thirty guns and seven mortars; the whole length of the Mole itself is lined with a double tier of guns, bringing the total number up to 220, besides two single guns, 68-pounders, which are over 20 feet in length. Then along the sea front of the town itself there are nine more batteries; two by the left-hand end of the triangle's base; one, called the fish-market battery, to the right of these, and nearly

opposite the entrance of the harbour; three more along the inner side of the harbour; one over the gateway of the pier, and two more to the right of it. Besides all these there are six batteries and a fort on the north side of the town, and three batteries and a very heavy fort on the shore beyond it, all within 1200 yards each way; and many other forts and batteries on the hills around, not so near, but still within shot of a fleet in the bay. Altogether the 500 guns are so placed as to make an attack a most formidable risk for a fleet of wooden ships. Remember too that the Algerines have collected 40,000 janissaries and other troops, all ferociously brave; and in their harbour are nine frigates and corvettes, and thirty-seven gunboats ready to dash out and attack the British fleet if the batteries once succeed in crippling them. In short Lord Exmouth is about to go deliberately into a big hornet's nest, where there is nothing for it but to kill or be killed outright.

In an undertaking of this kind, where almost everything depends on good shooting, it is of course very necessary to train the guns' crews beforehand; the more so because they can have had no experience of firing against stone batteries. During the voyage from Portsmouth to Algiers, which took just a month, the ship's companies were exercised at the guns every day in the week except Sundays; and every Tuesday and Friday the fleet cleared for action, and each ship fired six broadsides. Besides this the gun-layers were trained on board the flagship, the *Queen Charlotte*, by daily practice with a twelve-pounder on the quarter-deck. The target was a wooden frame three feet square, with rope-yarn

## 260 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

latticeed across it, and a wooden bottle for bull's eye in the centre; it was hung at the fore-topmast studding-sail boom, which of course projected well over the side of the ship. After a few days of this practice the first and second captains of the guns all became so accurate that they hardly ever missed the target, and shot away ten or twelve bottles every day.

The fleet sailed on July 25th, and on August 9th they reached Gibraltar. Here they found a Dutch Admiral, Van de Capellan, with a squadron of five frigates and a corvette; he asked Lord Exmouth to allow him to share in the attack on these enemies of the human race, and his ships did very good service, when the time came. On Tuesday, August 27th, the combined fleets were lying off Algiers almost becalmed, and at eleven in the morning Abraham Salamé was sent in under a flag of truce to carry Lord Exmouth's letter to the Dey.

The terms demanded in this letter were—the abolition of Christian slavery; the surrender of all Christian slaves; the restoration of ransom-money lately paid for Italian slaves; peace with Holland; and the immediate liberation of the British Consul and two boats' crews of H.M.S. *Prometheus*, whom the Algerines had detained a few days before.

The Dey was required to send his answer back within three hours; his own people had asked for two hours only. A note of acceptance was also sent with Lord Exmouth's letter; it needed nothing but the Dey's signature and seal. But he was determined not to give in without a fight; his people were even more enraged against the infidels, and the infidels were longing to punish the pirates for their unspeak-

able cruelties. The officers of the *Queen Charlotte* called out when the boat went off: "Salamé, if you return with an answer from the Dey that he accepts our demands without fighting, we will kill you instead!"

#### 7. FIRING THEM OUT

After three hours the boat was seen returning, with the signal that she was bringing no answer from the Dey. The *Queen Charlotte* immediately telegraphed to the fleet, "Are you ready?" and led in to the attack. The Algerines reserved their fire as the ships began to pass along the Mole, for they meant to take the flagship, and possibly others, by boarding from their thirty-seven gunboats. So at half-past two the *Queen Charlotte* reached the left-hand end of the Mole and anchored by the stern half a cable from it, also lashing her head to the main-mast of an Algerian brig lying in the mouth of the harbour. In this position her starboard broadside flanked the whole length of the Mole, right away to the lighthouse at the other end. The Mole was crowded with troops, who had got on to the parapet to look at the ships, and Lord Exmouth waved to them, as he passed, to get down under cover.

The other ships were none of them yet in position, when the flagship was made fast, and her crew gave three cheers. The Algerines replied with three single shots, one of which hit the old *Superb*. At the first flash Lord Exmouth gave the order, "Stand by!" at the second "Fire!" The sound of the third shot was drowned by the roar of the broadside, and the enemy's batteries all thundered in reply.

## 262 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

The old *Superb* now came up and anchored 250 yards astern of the flagship, and the *Minden* about her own length from the *Superb*. The *Albion* came next, and then the *Impregnable*; but none of the five except the flagship had time to get as close up as had been intended. But the frigates made up for this; they and the Dutch Squadron came in most gloriously under a very heavy fire: the *Leander* placed herself beyond the *Queen Charlotte*, right opposite the Fishmarket battery and quite close to the harbour mouth; the *Severn* and *Glasgow* a little ahead of her, and the Dutch ships further on still, opposite the batteries on the shore beyond the town. Boldest of all were the *Hebrus*, who got as far as the larboard bow of the *Superb*, and lay there becalmed by the effect of the cannonade; and the *Granicus*, whose captain, William Furlong Wise, succeeded in taking her right in between the *Queen Charlotte* and *Superb*—a 36-gun frigate lying in the line of battle between a three-decker and a 74.

The *Queen Charlotte* fired three broadsides in the first six minutes; the first of them killed and wounded 500 of the enemy, and all three swept the fortifications of the Mole-head irresistibly. Seeing that she had ruined this part of the defences, she then sprang her broadside towards the pier-gate and the lighthouse battery. These were further from her, but the gunners had been so thoroughly trained that they soon crumbled the tower of the lighthouse and brought down gun after gun from the batteries. When the last of those guns fell an Algerine chief was seen to leap upon the ruins of the parapet and shake his scimitar at the ship with useless rage.

While this was going on the enemy's most desperate stroke was being attempted; under cover



“And shake his scimitar at the ship with useless rage”

of the dense smoke their gunboats came out of the harbour to board the flagship. Fortunately the *Leander*, lying exactly opposite the harbour mouth,

## 264 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

and being fairly clear of the smoke, was able to see them and get her guns onto them in time. She defeated them in a very few very exciting minutes, sinking thirty-three out of the thirty-seven. Then, as the Algerines showed no signs of surrendering, and some of his other ships were being hard pressed, Lord Exmouth determined to destroy the frigates and corvettes inside the harbour. The *Leander* was ordered to cease firing, and the *Queen Charlotte's* barge, under command of Lieutenant Richards, with Major Gossett of the Miners, Lieutenant Wolridge of the Marines, and Mr. M'Clintock, a midshipman, boarded the nearest frigate and fired her with laboratory torches and a carcass shell. She was completely in flames almost before the barge's crew could get off again.

This was a success which very nearly cost the Admiral dear. He had hoped that the frigate would set fire to her consorts, but instead of that she all but burnt the *Leander* and the flagship. The flames freed her from her moorings and she drifted right out of the harbour and close along the broadsides of the *Queen Charlotte* and the *Leander*; finally she grounded under the wall of the town. The gunboats then began to fire carcass shells on to another large frigate in the centre of the harbour; they set her ablaze in spite of all that the Algerines could do, and the flames spread from her to almost all the other ships in the port, and also to the storehouses and arsenal. But this again was a very dangerous success, for she also ended by drifting out of the harbour and almost setting fire to the flagship.

It was now about sunset, and the ships in this

part of the action had practically finished their work, with wonderfully little loss; but things had not been going so well elsewhere. The *Impregnable*, being still under sail when the firing began, had been unable to find her way through the dense smoke to the position marked out for her. She had therefore anchored where she was, right opposite to the lighthouse and the heaviest batteries of the Mole, which took their revenge on her for the damage done to them by the raking fire of the *Queen Charlotte*. Rear-Admiral Milne, whose flag was flying in the *Impregnable*, now sent a message to his commander-in-chief, asking that a frigate might be sent to help him in keeping the enemy's fire down. The *Glasgow* was ordered to get under weigh immediately, but the cannonade had completely laid the wind, and after three-quarters of an hour her utmost exertions had only moved her about two cables' lengths. All the ships were in the same difficulty, and Lord Exmouth saw that as the *Impregnable* could not be supported she must be given permission to haul off. By this time she was "dreadfully cut up": she had lost 150 men killed and wounded; there had been a very bad explosion on board, and the shot were still coming in fast. But she was not beaten; her crew, cheered on by Admiral Milne and his flag-captain, Edward Bruce, refused to go out of action, and she kept her station to the end.

Only one means of helping her remained, and fortunately it succeeded. An explosion vessel, loaded with 143 barrels of powder, had been brought from Gibraltar to be used against the Algerine ships in the



## 266 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

harbour. They were already destroyed, so this gigantic torpedo was placed at the disposal of Admiral Milne. He sent it off, under Lieutenant Fleming, with Major Reid of the Engineers, and Captain Herbert Powell, a volunteer in the *Impregnable*; and after what was probably the most dangerous voyage ever made by any British officer, they ran it ashore under the 30-gun battery to the north of the light-house, and got away in safety. At nine o'clock it exploded with terrific effect; the sound was heard sixty miles out at sea.

The fire of the fleet now slackened; for the enemy's guns were silenced, except those in the batteries furthest up the hill and along the shore. Besides, the ships were running short of ammunition. Their expenditure had been beyond all record. They fired in about eight hours nearly 118 tons of powder and 50,000 round-shot, besides 900 shells thrown by the bomb-vessels, and rockets and shells from the flotilla. Even now the flagship, as her head was hauled round to seaward, continued to fire all the guns abaft her main-mast, and it was not until nearly half-past ten that she got wind enough to draw out of range. Then "a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning came on, with torrents of rain; while the flaming ships and storehouses illuminated all the ruins, and increased the grandeur of the scene."

At one o'clock the fleet anchored in the middle of the bay; Lord Exmouth read prayers to the wounded, and Admirals Milne and Van de Capellan came aboard to congratulate. Then the officers had supper with the Admiral, and everybody went to sleep "almost

like dead men." Next morning Lieutenant Burgess was sent in to Algiers with a flag of truce, and presented the same demands as before. This time they were at once accepted by the Dey, who also agreed to compensate the British Consul and make a formal apology to him in terms dictated by Captain Brisbane of the *Queen Charlotte*. The slaves were delivered up two days later; the total number, including some freed before the battle, was over 3000, of whom 18 were Englishmen. Some of them had been 30 years in captivity; all were chained with heavy irons day and night. The strongest of them carried a hundred pounds' weight of iron, and their limbs were seared and blackened for life by it. Not one of them ever hoped to see a friend again, or to be free for one hour from his appalling misery.

Of course Lord Exmouth was heaped with honours; and of course he thought very little about them. He had been set a stiff piece of work, and he had done it with perfect judgment and mastery—that was his real reward. He enjoyed, too, the feeling that the whole world was with him—no victory has ever caused such universal rejoicing and so little regret. This is the account which he wrote home to his brother:

"It has pleased God to give me again the opportunity of writing you, and it has also pleased Him to give success to our efforts against these hordes of barbarians. I never, however, saw any set of men more obstinate at their guns, and it was superior fire only that could keep them back. To be sure, nothing could stand before the *Queen Charlotte's* broadside. Everything fell before it; and the Swedish Consul

## 268 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

assures me we killed above 500 at the very first fire, from the crowded way in which troops were drawn up, four deep above the gunboats, which were also full of men. I had myself beckoned to many around the guns close to us to move away, previous to giving the order to fire; and I believe they are within bounds when they state their loss at 7000 men. Our old friend John Gaze was as steady as a rock, and it was a glorious sight to see the *Charlotte* take her anchorage, and to see her flag towering on high, when she appeared to be in the flames of the Mole itself; and never was a ship nearer burnt, it almost scorched me off the poop: we were obliged to haul in the ensign, or it would have caught fire. Everybody behaved uncommonly well. Admiral Milne came on board at two o'clock in the morning, and kissed my hand fifty times before the people, as did the Dutch Admiral Von Capellan. I was but slightly touched, in thigh, face, and fingers—my glass cut in my hand, and the skirts of my coat torn off by a large shot; but as I bled a good deal, it looked as if I was badly hurt, and it was gratifying to see and hear how it was received even in the cockpit, which was then pretty full. My thigh is not quite skinned over, but I am perfectly well, and hope to reach Portsmouth by the 10th of October. Ferdinand has sent me a diamond star. Wise behaved most nobly, and took up a line-of-battleship's station;—but all behaved nobly. I never saw such enthusiasm in all my service. Not a wretch shrunk anywhere; and I assure you it was a very arduous task, but I had formed a very correct judgment of all I saw, and was confident, if supported, I should succeed. I could not wait for an

offshore wind to attack; the season was too far advanced, and the landwinds become light and calmy. I was forced to attack at once with a lee shore, or perhaps wait a week for a precarious wind along-shore: and I was quite sure I should have a wind off the land about one or two in the morning, and equally sure we could hold out that time. Blessed be God, it came, and a dreadful night with it of thunder, lightning and rain, as heavy as I ever saw. Several ships had expended all their powder, and been supplied from the brigs. I had latterly husbanded, and only fired when they fired on us; and we expended 350 barrels and 5420 shot, weighing above 65 tons of iron. Such a state of ruin of fortifications and houses was never seen, and it is the opinion of all the consuls that two hours' more fire would have levelled the town: the walls are all so cracked. Even the aqueducts were broken up, and the people famishing for water. The sea-defences, to be made effective, must be rebuilt from the foundation. The fire all round the *Mole* looked like Pandemonium. I never saw anything so grand, and so terrific, for I was not on velvet, for fear they would drive on board us. The copper bottoms floated full of fiery hot charcoal, and were red hot above the surface, so that we could not hook on our fire-grapnels to put the boats on, and could do nothing but push fire-booms, and spring the ship off by our warps, as occasion required."

That letter, I imagine, is quite characteristic of him: it has no fine phrases or deep reflections, but everything is put down just as it comes to his recollection—most of it is like the description of a big football match, written by a boy to his brother. And

## 270 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

this is natural enough, for in spite of all the peerages and diamond stars, he still kept at 59 the best qualities of his boyhood : and here he is, at the end of his last adventure, standing on the poop of his flagship, with his cheek plastered, and his leg bandaged, and his spectacles broken, and his coat "all cut up by musket balls and by grape," talking jovially at two in the morning about his nine hours' battle—the same quick masterful warm-blooded fellow as that long ago midshipman, "young Edward Pellew."

# THE ADVENTURES OF DAVID FARRAGUT

## 1. THE YOUNGEST MID. OF ALL.

THE career of David Farragut has a special interest for us, not only because he was a splendid fighter, and won great victories in a great war, but because he forms a link between the old days and the new. He belonged to the same generation as Charles and Basil and John Franklin; he began his service as they did in a wooden sailing-ship and fought in the same war, though on the opposite side. But he out-lived them all, and had experiences which they never had; for he ended by commanding a fleet which contained ironclads with steam-propellers and huge modern guns, and had to face explosive submarine mines very much like those in use to-day. So his life seems to answer that question which comes naturally into our minds when we read the history of the old wars—the question of how the heroes of those days would have fared in the new difficulties and new dangers of modern war. And the answer, as you will see, is that guns and armour and machinery are not the most important things in war; they may make changes in the way things are done, but they do not take away the supreme value of character and

## 272 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

training. It is not walls or ships or armaments, but men, that are the making of a great nation; and David Farragut's life was a proof of this.

He was born on the 5th of July 1801, near Knoxville in Eastern Tennessee, one of the southern states of North America. His father, George Farragut, was a Spaniard, who had emigrated to North America in 1776 from the island of Minorca, where his family had lived for centuries. Here he found himself in the midst of the American Revolution, and at once enlisted on behalf of the colonists and served till the end of the war. He then married and settled down to try and build up his fortunes. The part of the country where the Farraguts lived was very wild, and still infested by Red Indians, who were hostile to the colonists. One of the first things that David could remember was being sent into the loft because the Indians were coming, while his mother barricaded the door and stood ready to defend it with an axe.

While David was still quite a small boy, George Farragut moved his family to New Orleans, where he received the appointment of sailing master in the Navy.

It was here, in the year 1808, that the incident occurred which indirectly led to David becoming a sailor. One day his father was fishing on Lake Pontchartrain, near New Orleans, when he came across another boat containing an old gentleman, a Mr. Porter, who had suddenly been taken ill from the heat of the sun. David's father took him home and cared for him in every possible way, but in vain, for not long afterwards old Mr. Porter died. Mrs. Farragut was herself very ill of yellow fever at the same

time, and she died just before Mr. Porter. They were buried on the same day. Mr. Porter's son, Commander David Porter, was so grateful for the kindness that had been shown to his father that soon afterwards, when he came to visit the Farragut family in their home, he offered to adopt one of the boys. The eldest boy William had already received his midshipman's warrant, so David, then seven years old, was asked if he too would like to be a sailor. He promptly said "Yes," and was carried off by Commander Porter and put to school till he was old enough to enter the Navy. He was promised his midshipman's warrant when he should be ten years old. As a matter of fact he was only nine and a half when he received it, but he remained at school for another seven months. Then in August 1811 Commander Porter, who had just been appointed to the *Essex*, took David on board with him, and made him midshipman of his gig, in order to have him more directly under his own eye.

The *Essex* was a frigate which had been built by subscription among the citizens of Salem in order to help the United States Government to protect American commerce from the continual attacks made on it by France and Great Britain. In 1798 Congress, without declaring war, ordered that all armed French vessels should be seized whenever they were met with on the high seas. But the United States Navy was quite inadequate to carry out this order, and certain patriotic citizens started subscriptions for building extra ships. The *Essex* was launched on the 30th of September 1799 amid general rejoicings. She measured 850 tons, and carried originally 26



## 274 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

long twelve-pounders and 16 thirty-two pound carronades and two chase guns. This battery was rearranged later, and she was given 40 carronades—thirty-two pounders—and 6 long twelves, which was an advantage “in engagements at close quarters, but a source of weakness unless the ship could choose her own position and come up with the enemy.”

In October 1811 she was sent as part of a squadron under Commodore Rodgers to cruise along the coast and protect American commerce from foreign interference. David tells us in his journal that she was the smartest vessel in the squadron, and received the Commodore's compliments. Commander Porter was able to divide his ship's company into three instead of the usual two watches, because his men were so exceptionally efficient that a smaller number was needed for each watch.

The winter and spring passed without any events or captures of great importance. But on June 18th war was openly declared against Great Britain, and the *Essex* at once put into port for necessary repairs and refitting. She was not ready in time to sail with Commodore Rodgers on the 21st of June, but she got away on July 3rd, Porter having received his promotion to post-captain the day before; and she spent the rest of the summer in cruising round the coast, capturing the enemy's vessels whenever she got the chance. On the 7th of September she anchored at the mouth of the Delaware to get provisions for a distant cruise that had been planned, partly at Porter's suggestion, to attempt the destruction of the British whale fishery in the Pacific. Three ships were selected for this service. The *Con-*

*stitution*, a fine frigate, under Commodore Bainbridge, and the *Hornet*, a sloop of war, were to sail from Boston on October 26th, and the *Essex* was to leave the Delaware a day or two later. As it was most important that the enemy's suspicions should not be in any way aroused, the ships were not to attempt a meeting until they were well across the Atlantic. One of the Cape Verde Islands off the African coast was the first rendezvous appointed. Failing this the ships were to go on to the island of Fernando Noronha, off the coast of Brazil.

The *Essex* arrived in the Cape Verde Islands on the 27th of November. She remained there for five days, and then, having received no news of either the *Constitution* or the *Hornet*, she went on to Fernando Noronha, where she arrived on the 15th of December. On the way she captured the British packet *Nocton*, and took out of her £11,000 in specie, a prize which she was shortly to find very useful.

At Fernando Noronha Captain Porter sent a boat on shore for news. It brought him back a letter apparently addressed to Sir James Yeo of the British frigate *Southampton*, but Porter found a message for himself from Bainbridge secretly written between the lines in sympathetic ink. This told him to cruise off Rio and wait for the *Constitution*. In January Porter had to put in to refit, and to get water and provisions at St. Catherine's, a station belonging to the Portuguese, who were allied to Great Britain but not at war with the United States. Here he heard rumours of the action between the *Constitution* and the *Java*, and a report of the approach of British reinforcements. Porter was

## 276 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

convinced that the neutrality of the port where he was lying would not be respected by the enemy, and as it now seemed unlikely that the American ships would succeed in joining forces, he promptly decided to sail at once for the Pacific, and to undertake with the *Essex* alone the destruction of the British whale fishery and other commerce in those seas.

The *Essex* arrived off Valparaiso on the 11th of March, after a fearful passage round Cape Horn. For twenty-one days she struggled with furious gales and heavy seas. On one occasion she shipped so much water through the breaking in of her port holes, that her seamen thought she must sink, and many of those below fell on their knees in despair. The boatswain's mate, however, called them cheerily on deck, and told them to "put their best foot forward, as there was one side of the ship left yet."

Captain Porter found his presence in the Pacific badly needed, not only for attacking British commerce, but for protecting American vessels from being robbed and taken by the Spaniards, who considered themselves allies of the British. The *Essex* cruised along the coast and among the Galapagos Islands till the beginning of June. By then she had captured the *Barclay*, originally an American ship, and seven whalers. Captain Porter selected the fastest and best of the whalers, a vessel called the *Atlantic*, about half the size of the *Essex*, and commissioned her as a United States cruiser. He renamed her the *Essex Junior*; she carried twenty guns, and was manned by sixty of the *Essex*' crew, under the command of her first lieutenant. She was immediately ordered to convoy the *Barclay* and





four of the prizes to Valparaiso. David, who was now twelve years old, was the midshipman chosen to command the seamen who were to manage the *Barclay* during the voyage. The *Barclay's* old captain, who also accompanied the ship, was furious at being commanded by a mere boy. He thought that by intimidating him he could get the management of the ship into his own hands. When they parted company from the rest of the squadron, he told the young mid. with great contempt that he would "find himself off New Zealand in the morning." David, though inwardly half afraid of the old man, felt that the time had come to show what stuff he was made of. He summoned up his courage and told the captain that he desired the main-topsail filled away, that the ship might close up with the *Essex Junior*. Here is David's own account of what happened next. "He (the captain) replied that he would shoot any man who dared to touch a rope without his orders; he would go his own course, and had no idea of trusting himself with a d d nutshell; and then he went below for his pistols. I called my right-hand man of the crew and told him my situation. I also informed him that I wanted the main-topsail filled. He answered with a clear 'Ay, ay, sir!' in a manner which was not to be misunderstood, and my confidence was perfectly restored. From that moment I became master of the vessel, and immediately gave all necessary orders for making sail, notifying the captain not to come on deck with his pistols unless he wished to go overboard, for I would really have had very little trouble in having such an order obeyed." When Captain Downes of the *Essex Junior*

## 278 THE BOOK OF 'THE BLUE SEA

heard of this incident he had an interview with the captain of the *Barclay*, and put things on to a more amicable footing between him and David. Like Sir Peter Parker, he meant to have the midshipman's jacket respected.

The *Essex Junior* rejoined the *Essex* at the Galapagos Islands on the 30th of September, bringing with her letters from the American consul at Buenos Ayres containing important news. The British frigate *Phoebe*, of thirty-six guns, had sailed from Rio Janeiro on July 5th bound for the Pacific. Two sloops of war, the *Cherub* and the *Raccoon*, accompanied her. Any day their sails might be seen on the horizon. The *Essex* had by now taken eleven whalers, and only one remained uncaptured in these regions. Her work in the Pacific was therefore finished, and Captain Porter had fulfilled his mission with great success, though all his prizes but two were afterwards recaptured or destroyed. But when he heard of the approach of the British squadron under Captain Hillyar, who had been his personal friend in the Mediterranean, he decided that he must stay and fight it out if any fair chance offered, although he knew that the enemy's ships together were considerably superior to his own. He immediately sailed for the Marquesas so as to throw the enemy off his scent, and to find a harbour where he could be hidden while he made the necessary preparations for fighting.

### 2. THE HARD FATE OF THE "ESSEX"

The *Essex* remained here till the 9th of December, when she sailed with the *Essex Junior* and one of the

prizes for Valparaiso. Every day during the voyage the crew were practised at the guns and with muskets, and Captain Porter trained all his men as swordsmen, for he knew that in any fight he must get as near the enemy as possible, because the *Essex* had so few long guns. As her strength was greatest at close quarters, a well-drilled and well-equipped boarding party might at any moment be required, and it was of the greatest importance that his men should be efficient in this way. "I have never yet been in a ship," said Farragut, years afterwards, "where the crew of the old *Essex* was represented, but that I found them to be the best swordsmen on board. They had been so thoroughly trained as boarders that every man was prepared for such an emergency, with his cutlass as sharp as a razor, a dirk made from a file by the ship's armourer, and a pistol."

On the 3rd of February the *Essex* anchored in Valparaiso bay; and the *Essex Junior* was ordered to cruise off the harbour to give warning of Captain Hillyar's appearance, for it was feared that he might disregard the fact that Valparaiso was a neutral port and attack at once. This anxious scouting was kept up for four days, and was then abandoned, just at the very moment of greatest need. On the 7th of February a dance was given on board the *Essex*, and for that evening the *Essex Junior* was allowed to come in and anchor. The guests had scarcely gone, and the ball-room decorations had not yet been taken down, when two strange sail were sighted; they were the *Phoebe* and *Cherub*. The *Essex* and her *Junior* had only just time to clear for action, anchor



## 280 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

close together, and recall their liberty men from shore.

Captain Hillyar had, of course, no expectation of being able to fight in a neutral harbour, and he proved it by not manning his guns or beating to quarters. But the Americans could not know that, and they were determined not to be caught off guard. They stood to their guns, with matches burning and boarders standing by, fully armed. Perhaps there never was a more anxious position in naval war. You must remember that the two captains were old friends; each knew the other to be a strong man, who would play the quickest stroke for his own country that was possible within the rules—for in war you have no right to give away advantages. Captain Porter's position was the more difficult, because, though he was the weaker in an open fight at sea, here at close quarters he had the advantage, and a breach of neutrality would give him a glorious chance.

Imagine, then, the excitement on board the *Esser*. The *Phoebe* not only came close astern of her and inquired politely after Captain Porter's health, but then put her helm down and luffed up between the two American ships. Porter hailed that if she touched his ship he should fire at once. Hillyar replied calmly that he had no intention of falling on board the *Esser*; and he avoided doing so by laying his topsails to the mast at the last moment, and passing astern of her. But the risk he ran was tremendous. David tells how the explosion was all but caused by a boy on the *Esser*, who had been ashore and had come back drunk. "When the

*Phoebe* was close alongside, and all hands at quarters—the powder boys stationed with slow matches ready to discharge the guns, the boarders, cutlass in hand, standing by to board in the smoke, as was our custom at close quarters—the intoxicated youth saw, or imagined that he saw, through the port, someone on the *Phoebe* grinning at him. ‘My fine fellow, I’ll stop you making faces,’ he exclaimed, and was just about to fire his gun when Lieutenant M’Knight saw the movement, and with a blow sprawled him on the deck. Had that gun been fired, I am convinced that the *Phoebe* would have been ours.”

That is very likely true, but it would not have been a victory worthy of Captain Porter; and he probably approved the conduct of Lieutenant M’Knight rather than that of the drunken sailor. His great desire was to fight a single-handed action with the *Phoebe* on fairly equal terms, for at medium range the frigates were pretty well matched, but the *Essex Junior* was hopelessly inferior to the *Cherub*. While all the ships were lying at anchor, the officers and men on both sides met and made friends on shore, and Captain Porter did everything he could to persuade or challenge Captain Hillyar to meet him in single combat. The American navy, being a very small one, rightly made great efforts to turn out large and well-manned frigates, and paid high honour to a victorious captain. They had had some striking successes; the United States had taken the *Macedonian*, and the *Constitution* had defeated two enemies in succession, the *Guerrière* and the *Java*. Smaller vessels, such as the *Wasp* and *Enter-*

## 282 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

*prise*, had done well too. But the crushing defeat of the *Chesapeake* by the *Shannon* had made the American captains more cautious, and also more keen to score when they could. As for Captain Hillyar, he, too, would no doubt have liked a frigate duel, but he had strict orders to stop the career of the *Essex* as a commerce-destroyer, either by taking her or by keeping her blockaded in port.

Captain Porter, finding at the end of a week that his friend and enemy was not to be tempted, made up his mind to escape. First the *Essex Junior*, then the *Essex*, then both together, tried to get past the English ships. On March 3rd the *Essex Junior* made another attempt, and finally on March 28th both tried again. This time they had no sooner got back to their moorings than the *Essex* broke her cable and began to drag her anchor. She was blown out to sea, and by good luck very nearly succeeded in getting to windward of the *Phoebe*. But the luck did not hold; just as she was rounding the west point of the bay a heavy squall carried away her main-topmast, and she had to anchor within half a mile of the shore. Both the British ships at once bore down upon her.

Seldom has a brave man been in a more unfortunate position than Captain Porter. He might reasonably have called a truce, and pointed out to his opponent that though the *Essex* was no longer in the port or within the regulation three miles of it, she was within much less than three miles of the shore, which was the shore of a neutral country. He was too proud, possibly too sanguine, to think of that; what he did was to hoist five flags, clear for

action, and get springs on his cables so as to bring his broadside to bear in any direction.

But his men were not unaware of their danger. "I well remember," David wrote afterwards, "the feelings of awe produced in me by the approach of the hostile ships; even to my young mind it was perceptible in the faces of those around me, as clearly as possible, that our case was hopeless. It was equally apparent that all were ready to die at their guns rather than surrender; and such I believe to have been the determination of the crew, almost to a man."

The *Phoebe* opened fire about 4 o'clock, the *Cherub* five minutes later; the *Essex* replied as well as she could with three long twelves run out of her stern ports. Very little harm was done at first on either side, owing to the long range and the baffling wind. At 4.30 the British ships wore, and as they did so the *Essex* had a gleam of good fortune; a shot passed through several folds of the *Phoebe's* main-sail, another wounded her jib-boom, and a third cut away some stays. But Captain Hillyar repaired his damages and closed again. This time the wind fell and the *Cherub* could not get into action, but the *Phoebe* found her mark exactly and had the enemy at her mercy.

David's own account is terribly vivid. "I shall never forget," he says, "the horrid impression made upon me at the sight of the first man I had ever seen killed. He was a boatswain's mate, and was fearfully mutilated. It staggered and sickened me at first; but they soon began to fall around me so fast that it all appeared like a dream, and produced no effect upon

## 284 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

my nerves. I can remember well, while I was standing near the captain, just abaft the main-mast, a shot came through the waterways and glanced upward, killing four men who were standing by the side of the gun, taking the last one in the head and scattering his brains over both of us. But this awful sight did not affect me half as much as the death of the first poor fellow. I neither thought of nor noticed anything but the working of the guns."

There were, however, other things which compelled his notice. "An old quarter-master, named Francis Bland, was standing at the wheel when I saw a shot coming over the foreyard in such a direction that I thought it would strike him or me; so I told him to jump, at the same time pulling him towards me. At that instant the shot took off his right leg, and I afterwards found that my coat tail had been carried away. I helped the old fellow below, and inquired for him after the action, but he had died before he could be attended to."

Later David was sent to fetch some gun-primers. "In going below, while I was on the ward-room ladder, the captain of the gun directly opposite the hatchway was struck full in the face by an eighteen-pound shot, and fell back on me; we tumbled down the hatch together. I struck on my head, and fortunately he fell on my hips. . . . I lay for some moments stunned by the blow, but soon recovered consciousness enough to run on deck. The captain, seeing me covered with blood, asked if I was wounded, to which I replied, 'I believe not, sir.' 'Then,' said he, 'where are the primers?' This brought me completely to my senses, and I ran

below and carried the primers on deck. When I came up the second time I saw the captain fall, and in my turn ran up and asked if he were wounded. He answered me almost in the same words, 'I believe not, my son, but I felt a blow on the top of my head.' He must have been knocked down by the wind of a passing shot, as his hat was somewhat damaged."

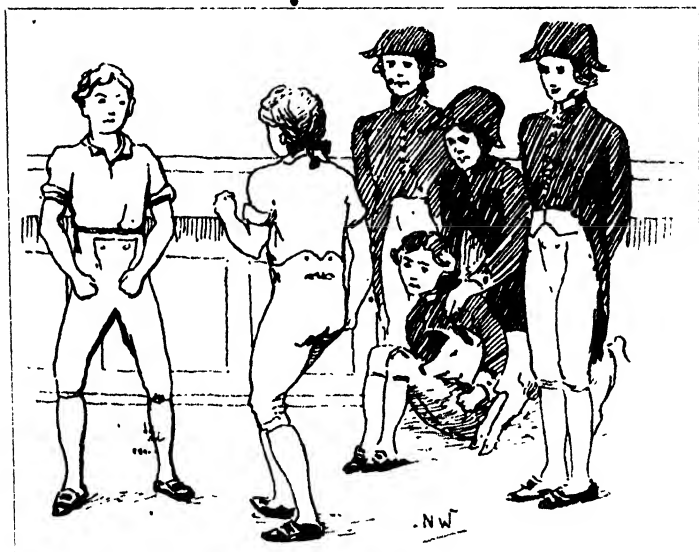
After half an hour of this last stage the crew of the *Essex* could stand it no longer; they entreated Captain Porter to spare the lives of those who were still left on deck, for there was in any event no chance of saving the ship. He had the courage and good sense to consent; but before hauling down his colours he sent the gold ashore in the boats of the *Essex Junior*, and gave his crew permission to escape if they could by swimming. Some of them did so, but thirty-one were drowned in the attempt.

David's share in the surrender was a curious and characteristic one. First, by the captain's order, he threw the signal-book overboard and watched it sink out of sight; then he pitched after it all the pistols and muskets he could find. Finally, when he was taken on board the *Phoebe* next morning, he recognised the pet pig of the *Essex*, and claimed it as private property. The mid. who was in possession refused to give it up; but the others decided that he must fight for it. David won the fight and the pig; but that satisfaction did not prevent him from bursting into tears immediately afterwards, when Captain Hillyar asked him to breakfast in his own cabin. How Sir Peter Parker would have loved the boy for that! So did Captain Hillyar: "Never mind, my little fellow," he said very kindly, "it will

## 286 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

be your turn next, perhaps." David replied that he hoped so, and ran away to hide his tears.

Captain Hillyar himself had little cause for rejoicing. He had lost only five killed and ten wounded, but among the dead was his first lieutenant, William Ingram, a fine young officer whom he deeply regretted.



"The others decided that he must fight for it."

But the victory cost him dearer than that; his duty had compelled him to take every advantage of an enemy whom he knew and admired, and to strike down a hundred brave men who were in a hopeless and almost defenceless position. He wrote home in his official letter that "the defence of the *Essex*, taking into consideration our superiority of force,

the very discouraging circumstance of her having lost her main-topmast and being twice on fire, did honour to her brave defenders, and most fully evinced the courage of Captain Porter and those under his command. Her colours were not struck until the loss in killed and wounded was so awfully great, and her shattered condition so seriously bad, as to render further assistance unavailing."

The *Essex* was added to the British Navy, and was laid up to rot in the years of peace with hundreds of other famous ships. But David Farragut to the end of his life remembered her heroic fight, and compared it, as you will see, fifty years afterwards, with the greatest victory he ever won.

### 3. A QUESTION OF LOYALTY

David, as you may imagine, was not ill-treated by his captors: they sent him back to his own country as a prisoner on parole, and he went off to school at Chester. In November 1814 there was an exchange of prisoners, and his parole came to an end. He was ordered to join the *Spark*, a brig, but early in 1815 peace was made, and the *Spark's* cruise was stopped. David was then appointed to the 74-gun ship *Independence*, the flagship of a squadron about to sail against the pirates of Algiers, upon whom the United States had declared war. The Dey, however, came to terms at once; it was not until the following year that he finally hardened his heart, and received his punishment from the English and Dutch fleets, under Lord Exmouth.

In 1816 at the time of the attack on Algiers, David



## 288 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

was again in the Mediterranean, and actually on the Barbary coast, this time in the 74-gun ship *Washington*, a very smart ship commanded by Captain Creighton. In 1818 he spent nine months ashore at Tunis, with a tutor who had been chaplain in the *Washington*. Next year, when he was not yet eighteen, he was appointed acting lieutenant in the brig *Shark*, and after a year in her went home to pass his examination. In 1822 he served in the *John Adams*, and was appointed to the *Greyhound*, one of the fleet which was being sent against the pirates of the Caribbean Sea. The commodore was his old captain, David Porter, and the *Greyhound* was commanded by Lieutenant John Porter, the commodore's brother.

On his return home in 1823 David married, being then only twenty-two, and as both he and his wife suffered a good deal from ill-health, the next few years were spent mostly in shore-going duty. At last his wife died, and three years afterwards he married again. It was not until he was fifty-four that he was promoted to captain, and given command of the *Brooklyn*, a powerful steamship, which though classed as a sloop of war was of about the same tonnage as the old line-of-battle ships, and carried bigger guns, firing shell instead of round-shot. In fact she was a battleship of the modern kind, and the contrast between her and the old sailing ships must have been particularly striking to Farragut, for it was now ten years since he had been employed at sea. But the good workman does not quarrel with his tools; he masters them. In five years Farragut grasped all the possibilities of steam, big

guns, torpedoes and armour-plating, and was ready to use them when the time came.

The time came when the Southern States decided to secede from the Union, and so split the nation into two. The United States Government felt obliged to resist this secession by force, and civil war at once broke out. For officers of the army and navy who belonged to the Southern States this was a most cruel state of things: to their friends and relations, and perhaps to themselves too, it seemed that the South was to be robbed of freedom by coercion, and forced into a subordinate position under a Government which they had long detested. In many cases, therefore, they rebelled without hesitation, and enlisted in the Confederate forces with their neighbours. But Farragut's case was a still more difficult one, for his feelings were more evenly divided. On the one hand his home was in Norfolk, in a Southern state, where he lived among his wife's relations: on the other hand his whole life had been spent in the service of the United States, and his sense of duty was stronger than any personal feelings of his own. It was a hard trial, but he did not hesitate; he was able to sacrifice his local patriotism to a greater loyalty—loyalty to the ideal of his country as a whole.

Of course his neighbours were furious with him. The day after the secession had been voted, he went as usual to meet his fellow-citizens, and discuss matters with them. The moment he spoke one of them said impatiently that a man with such sentiments could not live in Norfolk; to which Farragut replied, "Very well, I can live somewhere else." His

## 290 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

wife agreed with him, and that same evening they left the place with their only son, and never saw it again as their home. Their journey north was not easy, for the fighting had already begun, the railway bridges were burnt, and the refugees had to travel part of the way in a canal boat. They settled in the village of Hastings on the Hudson River, and there at first they had a hard time of it, for after giving up everything for the sake of loyalty Farragut was looked upon with hatred and suspicion because he was a Southerner. For some time it seemed impossible that he should be given an active command, and this distressed him. He felt for the Secessionists, but he felt still more for his country, and saw that if she was not to be ruined there could be only one end to a civil war; to bring about that end as quickly as possible he was ready to fight even against his old friends.

At last in January 1862 his opportunity came. The Government decided to make a naval attack on New Orleans, and Mr. Gustavus V. Fox (Assistant-Secretary to the Navy), to whom the decision was due, consulted Farragut as to the possibility of running a fleet past the forts which guarded the approach to the city from the sea. His opinion was favourable, and on January 9th he was formally appointed to command the attacking fleet, which was called "the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron." He hoisted his flag in the *Hartford*, a sloop of war of the same class as the *Brooklyn*, and on the night of April 23rd he forced the passage of the Mississippi in a brilliant and successful running fight, losing only one tug out of his seventeen ships, and leaving

only three others behind him. Two days later he anchored off New Orleans with the remaining thirteen vessels, and three days after that the forts surrendered, the garrisons refusing to fight any longer, since the town was lost. The United States flag was then hoisted over the Custom House; the chief city of the Confederates, believed to be unapproachable by an enemy from the sea, had been taken at the first attempt by the Navy, and in the same moment the Navy had found its greatest commander.

#### 4. MOBILE BAY—THE FORTS AND THE FLEETS

For a year after the capture of New Orleans Farragut was chiefly employed in the upper waters of the Mississippi, running past the enemy's forts, destroying their ironclads, cutting their communications and stopping their supplies. In this way he gave valuable help to the armies besieging Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and both those places surrendered in July 1863. During this time of his service Farragut had many narrow escapes; his flagship, the *Hartford*, was hit no less than two hundred and forty times in all by shot or shell. It was during this year too that he received the first of his public honours; he was promoted in July 1862 to Rear-Admiral, a rank which had never before been held by any officer in the United States navy.

After the fall of Vicksburg and Port Jackson, Farragut went ashore for nearly six months. When he returned to his station in January 1864, he found the greatest adventure of his life waiting for him

## 292 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

—the battle of Mobile Bay. I cannot tell you the story of this without first describing the place, and explaining why it was necessary to fight a battle there, and to win it.

Mobile Bay is an inlet or fiord running inland from the Gulf of Mexico. It is about thirty miles long, and at the head of it, where it is very shallow, stands the city of Mobile, which can only be approached by boats drawing less than nine feet of water. But the middle of the bay, for a space of about four miles by two, is from twenty to twenty-four feet deep, and forms a valuable harbour. The entrance to this from the sea is a channel which passes between Mobile Point on the right and Dauphin Island on the left. On Mobile Point stands a large fort called Fort Morgan, close to the channel; on Dauphin Island there was then a smaller battery called Fort Gaines. This was about three miles from Fort Morgan, and two miles from the channel, those two miles being filled up by a hard sandbank. The channel itself is therefore about a mile wide, and ships coming in by it have to pass within easy range of Fort Morgan, which then had thirty-eight heavy guns mounted.

The importance of this harbour to the Confederates was very great. After the capture of New Orleans it was their best port on that coast; their ships could lie safely inside, or issue forth to run the blockade of Farragut's squadron. Moreover, at the head of the bay they were building a powerful ironclad, which they hoped would be able to destroy or drive away any blockading force, for they intended it to be protected by impenetrable plates, and armed with very

heavy guns, as well as with an irresistible ram. This ship, called the *Tennessee*, was the flagship of the Confederate Admiral Buchanan; Farragut and he were old friends, and each of them meant to make it his special business to take or sink the other.

The *Tennessee* was completed and brought down into the deep part of the harbour in May. Farragut would have attacked at once, before she had the opportunity of coming out to break up his blockade, but he was kept waiting for four ironclads which had been promised him, and also for a division of the army which was to attack from the land side. He found that neither the troops nor the ships could arrive till near the end of July, and in the meantime Buchanan might do untold damage; but very fortunately Buchanan did nothing. The commander of Fort Morgan, however, was not idle; he laid down a treble row of contact mines across the channel, leaving only a narrow passage of clear water close under the guns of the fort. By this means he hoped to make Farragut's squadron pass by in single line ahead, and within point blank range.

These floating mines and the thirty-eight guns in the fort were the first line of the defence; the second consisted of three small ships, the *Morgan*, the *Gaines*, and the *Selma*, and one powerful one, the *Tennessee*. The weak points of the *Tennessee* were her engines -- she could only steam six knots--and her steering-gear, which was of iron but exposed to the fire of an enemy. Otherwise she was a formidable ship, 209 feet long, and drawing only 14 feet when loaded, so that she could keep her distance by running into water too shallow for Farragut's best ships. Her

## 294 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

armour plating was five and six inches thick; on each broadside she carried two 6-inch rifled guns, and at each end one 7-inch gun, also rifled.

You will see that Farragut had two moves to make: first he had to keep down the fire of Fort Morgan, and run his ships through between the guns and the torpedoes; then to beat the *Tennessee* and her smaller friends. If he could not do that it was useless to force his way through, so that he really had to prepare for the second move first, and that is why he had asked for the four ironclads, or monitors as they were called.

These were ships of a new kind, not built on the broadside principle like the *Tennessee*, but on a plan suggested to their inventor, Ericsson, by the Swedish rafts which he used to see on his native rivers, each carrying a little round house of wood upon it. The monitor was merely a steam raft, nearly flush with the water, and carrying a round iron fort upon it, which was the origin of our modern turrets. These forts or turrets each carried two heavy guns, placed side by side, and pointing in the same direction; the guns were brought to bear by making the turret revolve, and while they were being reloaded the turret was always turned away from the enemy. Above the turret was a small iron conning-tower, which, of course, did not revolve with the turret; in it stood the pilot, and it was intended to hold the captain also, but owing to the difficulty of seeing through the small sight-holes, especially in the smoke of a fight, many captains preferred to stand outside on the roof of the turret, and give orders to the pilot through the holes.

Farragut had four of these monitors—two, the *Winnebago* and the *Chickasaw*, each carried four 11-inch guns, placed in two turrets of 8½-inch armour. The other two, the *Tecumseh* and the *Manhattan*, had only one turret each, but their armour was 10 inches thick, and they carried 15-inch guns—a calibre to which the super-Dreadnoughts are only now returning. The four ships together, with their twelve guns, seem at first sight more than a match for the *Tennessee* with only six; but none of the monitors' guns were rifled, so that they had far less range and penetration. Still their captains were all longing to get at their invulnerable enemy, and the Admiral was of the same mind. "I know," he wrote, "they will do all in their power to destroy us, and we will reciprocate the compliment. I hope to give them a fair fight if once I get inside."

The remainder of his fleet were wooden ships; the larger ones with broadside batteries and very few chase guns for end-on fire, the smaller ones weaker in every way. Farragut, as he thought out his first move, the passage of the forts, saw that all these ships would be in great danger before they got abreast of the enemy, because the channel began by running straight toward Fort Morgan and then turned almost at a right angle to pass by it. In the first part of the approach the ships would be raked by the guns of the fort before their broadsides could be brought to bear; and then when they were abreast the smaller and weaker ships would be unable to keep down the enemy's fire after the larger ones had gone past.

To get over these disadvantages he decided that



## 296 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

his fleet should advance in two columns; one, the starboard division composed of the four monitors, was to approach first and pass nearest to Fort Morgan; the other, the larboard division of wooden ships, was to approach under cover of the monitors' fire, and then pass the fort, keeping on the left side of the channel, close to the line of sunk torpedoes. As for the weak ships, they were to be saved as much as possible by being taken into action under the wing of their bigger companions. Each of the seven smaller vessels was to be lashed to a larger one, on the port side, and then cast loose as soon as the fort had been successfully passed. Of course all the ships in both columns were to be careful to turn quite clear round the black buoy which marked the end of the triple line of torpedoes; for to touch a single torpedo was more dangerous than to stand fire from all the thirty-eight guns of Fort Morgan.

The only things now left to wait for were a flood tide, to help any wounded ships past the guns, and a west wind to take the smoke away from the fleet and towards the batteries on shore. Given his monitors and those two conditions, Farragut was ready to attack.

### 5. THE FIGHT IN THE CHANNEL

The last of the monitors—the *Tecumseh* under Captain Craven—arrived on the 4th of August. The same day the Admiral had written this letter home:

"FLAGSHIP 'HARTFORD,'  
OFF MOBILE, August 4, 1864.

"MY DEAREST WIFE,—I write and leave this letter for you. I am going into Mobile in the morning, if God is my leader, as I hope He is, and in Him I place my trust. If He thinks it is the proper place for me to die, I am ready to submit to His will in that as in all other things. My great mortification is that my vessels, the ironclads, were not ready to have gone in yesterday. The army landed last night, and are in full view of us this morning, and the *Tecumseh* has not yet arrived from Pensacola.

"God bless and preserve you, my darling, and my dear boy, if anything should happen to me; and may His blessings also rest upon your dear mother and all your sisters and their children.

"Your devoted and affectionate husband, who never for one moment forgot his love, duty, or fidelity to you, his devoted and best of wives.

"D. G. FARRAGUT."

That evening the sun went down behind a heavy curtain of rain, but by midnight the weather was clear and calm. The Admiral slept restlessly, and at three o'clock sent his servant to find out what wind there was. When he heard that it was light, but from the south-west, he said, "Then we will go in in the morning."

At half-past four the smaller ships got under way, and each went alongside its protector; at half-past five the seven pairs were lashed together waiting

## 298 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

for orders. The Admiral was at breakfast, and said quietly to his flag-captain as he drank his tea, "Well, Drayton, we might as well get under way."

At ten minutes past six the flagship crossed the bar into the channel; at half-past six the column of ships in pairs was formed. Farragut had wished to lead the line himself in the *Hartford*, and he afterwards believed that he had been wrong in not doing so. But he gave up his place at the earnest request of many of his officers, who could not face the tremendous risk of losing their commander-in-chief in the first and most dangerous crisis of the attack. So the *Brooklyn* led, and the *Hartford* came second, with the gunboat *Metacomet* lashed on her port side.

Meantime the four monitors were also forming their column on the inner side of the channel, Captain Craven leading in the *Tecumseh*, and firing the first two shots at Fort Morgan. At five minutes to seven the whole fleet went ahead, and the fort opened fire upon the *Brooklyn* and the monitors. In order to be clear of the smoke Captain Jouett of the *Metacomet* was standing high up on the wheel-house of his ship, and the pilot of the *Hartford* had for the same purpose been stationed in the maintop. When the firing began the Admiral also stepped into the main rigging on the port side, and as the smoke got thicker and rose higher he went up step by step until he was close under the maintop. Here he could give his orders to Captain Jouett, and use his glass to overlook the whole course of the action. But the captain was afraid that he might be wounded or shaken by a shell, and fall upon the

deck; so he sent up a seaman with a rope to lash the Admiral to the rigging. So there he was, high above the thundering guns and the smoke, like a flag nailed to the mast, a splendid symbol of the fearlessness and directing power that mark the great



"Sent up a seaman with a rope to lash the Admiral to the rigging."

commander in any kind of conflict. Lord Exmouth and he make a fine pair of pictures for the imagination—two well-weathered gentlemen of fifty-nine and sixty-three facing the batteries of Algiers and Mobile Bay—the one with his spectacles broken and his coat-tails torn by grape, high on the poop of the

## 300 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

*Queen Charlotte*; the other overlooking his battle with the same heroic simplicity, bound for life or death to the futtock shrouds of the *Hartford*.

It was well for the service that Farragut had this simplicity of courage and judgment, for he had now to face a disaster which must have been fatal but for his instant and daring decision. The two columns were now approaching the line of torpedoes and the place at which they had to turn round the buoy and pass the fort. The monitors were all in action on the right, and as the wooden ships reached the curve of the channel their broadsides were beginning to bear on the batteries and to overpower them. But as Craven, who was leading the monitors and was about 300 yards ahead of the head of the other column, drew near the buoy, it looked to him to be so near the fort that he could not believe he was really intended to pass round it. He said to the pilot as they stood together up in the conning tower, "It is impossible that the Admiral means us to go inside that buoy; I cannot turn my ship."

Just then he saw the *Tennessee* moving a little to the left, and temptingly near; he changed his course and rushed straight for her, passing the buoy on the near side and going right across the torpedo line. At the same moment the *Brooklyn* stopped and backed; she had seen some imaginary torpedo buoys right ahead in the channel. The *Hartford*, her next astern, was obliged to stop too, and the *Richmond* was soon on top of her. The whole line was doubling up and getting jammed, right under the fire of the fort and the enemy's ships beyond. Before anything could be done the great disaster had happened. The

*Tecumseh*, with her guns loaded with steel shell and all steam up, had got within 200 yards of the *Tennessee* when Farragut saw her roll violently, right herself for a moment, and then go down head foremost. A single torpedo had destroyed and sunk her.

Craven was mistaken, but no man ever died a more splendid death. He might not understand his Admiral's plan, but he would not endanger it by hesitation. He staked his life at once, lost, and paid with the most unflinching generosity. As the ship heeled over there was only one moment in which the pilot or he could escape down the manhole of the conning tower. "After you, pilot," said Craven, and the pilot lived to tell of it.

Craven's admiral was worthy of him; he too staked all in a single instant, and he won. The *Brooklyn* was lying right across the channel ahead of him; on his right the *Manhattan* had passed on, and the other two monitors were passing, Captain Stevens of the *Winnebago* pacing quietly between his turrets under the fire of all the guns in Fort Morgan; and Captain Perkins of the *Chickasaw* "dancing about with delight and excitement" on the turret roof of his ship. Glorious fellows! but they blocked the *Hartford* in completely; she could only move to port, and there the torpedoes were waiting for her. But Farragut knew that it was that or nothing; at the worst his own destruction might clear the way for his followers. He turned his ship short round to port, went fast ahead under the stern of the *Brooklyn* and dashed straight at the line of the buoys, some way to the left of the *Tecumseh's* track. As the *Hartford* and the *Metacomet* passed over the mine-field their

## 302 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

crews could hear the torpedo-cases tapping against the copper bottoms of the ships, and some of the primers snapping; but not one exploded. The *Brooklyn* and *Richmond* followed, a mile behind, and then the four remaining pairs. Fort Morgan was a thing of the past; Farragut was in Mobile Bay.

### 6. THE FIGHT IN THE BAY

The naval battle was yet to come. For the first fifteen minutes the flagship had to bear the brunt of it. As she passed up into the bay the enemy's ships retreated just ahead of her, raking her on the star-board bow, while her own guns could make little or no reply. This was the *Tennessee's* chance too; her speed was not great enough to keep pace with the *Hartford*, so she tried to ram her as she passed. The Admiral's pilot put his helm over at the exactly right moment, and she failed; then at short range she fired two of her big guns, but they also missed. Farragut left her behind, and went on up the bay.

The *Tennessee* then attacked the remaining wooden ships in the column; one of them, the *Monongahela*, attempted to ram her in turn, but only succeeded in giving her a glancing blow; and as soon as she had passed on the *Tennessee* poured a raking fire into the pair of ships, by which the *Oneida* was completely disabled, and her captain, Mullany, lost an arm.

But by this time Farragut was out in the open, and free to turn his broadside on to the enemy. His fire immediately wrecked the *Gaines*, which only just succeeded in running ashore under Fort Morgan, where she was burnt that night by her commander.

The other two, the *Morgan* and the *Selma*, retreated towards the shoal water on the east side; but Farragut sent his gunboats in pursuit. Captain Jouett cut the lashings which held the *Metacomet* to the *Hartford*, backed clear, and raced after the *Selma* in a heavy squall, in which he actually overshot the chase. When the storm cleared his first shot finished the *Selma's* career, killing her first lieutenant and some of the crew, and injuring her so severely that she hauled down her colours. The *Morgan* got back under the fort, and at night escaped up the bay to the city of Mobile.

It was now half-past eight; and the flagship was anchored in the upper end of the deep water, about four miles above the fort. The men were at once sent to breakfast; they had been steaming for three hours and fighting for an hour and a half. The Admiral had come down from his watch-tower in the rigging, and was on the poop when his flag-captain came up to him. "What we have done has been well done, sir, but it all counts for nothing so long as the *Tennessee* is there under the guns of *Morgan*." "I know it," replied Farragut, "and as soon as the people have had their breakfasts I am going for her."

He was saved the trouble of doing that. Admiral Buchanan had no idea of waiting to be attacked. When the whole of the two columns had passed him he said to his captain, "Follow them up, Johnston; we can't let them off that way." But he followed them up in such a way as to throw away most of his advantages. If he had come on warily, using his rifled guns at long range, and keeping away into



## 304 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

shallow water when his opponents tried to close with him, he might have done an immense amount of damage, and perhaps ended by crippling his enemies and shutting them up in the bay. Instead of that he ran straight for the whole fleet at once, as if he were only anxious to come to close quarters.

Farragut ordered the monitors to attack him with their heavy guns, and they were delighted to do it. The messenger who gave the order to Captain Perkins of the *Chickasaw* wrote afterwards: "I thought he would turn a somersault overboard with joy when I told him "the Admiral wants you to go at once and fight the *Tennessee*." But the monitors being very slow, the wooden ships were ordered to go ahead full speed and try to ram the ironclad first.

The *Monongahela* met her when she was about a quarter of a mile from the fleet; she struck her full amidships on the starboard side. The *Lackawanna* five minutes afterwards came in on her port side and also struck her fairly at right angles. Both these ships crushed their own stems above and below the water-line, but appeared to do no harm to the *Tennessee*; they also fired at her as they swung off, but their shot glanced from her armour without effect. Then came the *Hartford*: she met the *Tennessee* almost end on, and the two ships scraped by each other's port sides, the *Hartford* having her anchor crushed at the cat-head. She then fired seven 9-inch guns at close range, but they also failed to penetrate the ironclad.

The Admiral, who had gone aloft again, now ordered the *Lackawanna* and his own ship to circle

round and ram once more; but as they turned they collided, the *Lackawanna's* stem cutting the flagship down to within two feet of the water. The ship's company thought she must sink, and shouted, "Save the Admiral"; but Farragut came down the rigging and jumped into the chains to see how much damage was done. Then he ordered another charge to be made at once.

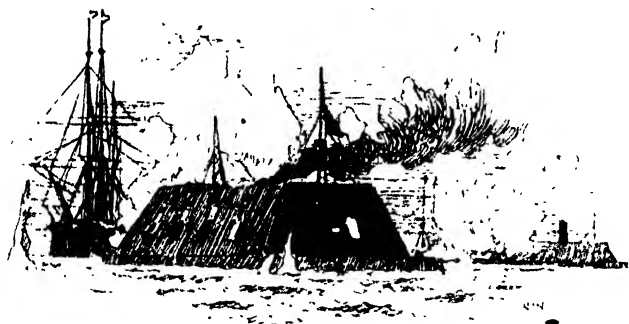
But by this time the monitors had come up and were taking the fight off his hands. They too had their misfortunes; the *Manhattan* had one of her 15-inch guns disabled, and though she got one shot with the other full on to the *Tennessee's* broadside, it only broke the armour without penetrating it. The *Winnebago*, her turrets being out of order, could only bring her guns to bear by means of her helm. But the *Chickasaw* did the work for all. She got within fifty yards of the *Tennessee's* stern, and there her commander, Perkins, kept her for half an hour, putting fifty-two rounds of 11-inch shot on to her. He shot away her steering chains, he shot away her smoke-stack, he wounded Admiral Buchanan, and was steadily shaking the iron armour of the ship to pieces. At last Captain Johnston reported to his wounded chief that the *Tennessee* could neither steer nor fire. "Well," replied Buchanan, "if you cannot do them any further damage you had better surrender." So Captain Johnston hoisted a white flag, and the battle of Mobile Bay was ended.

The flagship had lost twenty-five killed and twenty-eight wounded out of a crew of 300; the *Brooklyn*, out of about the same number, had eleven killed and forty-three wounded. The total loss of

## 306 THE BOOK OF THE BLUE SEA

the fleet was 222, besides 113 dead and buried in the *Tecumseh* with their heroic captain, Craven.

The forts held out a day or two. Fort Gaines was attacked by the *Chickasaw* on August 6th, and surrendered on the 7th. The commander of Fort Morgan claimed to be holding Farragut prisoner in the bay, but on the 22nd he perceived his mistake. The guns of the whole fleet, including the captured *Tennessee*, opened fire upon him at daybreak, sup-



"Hoisted a white flag"

ported by the siege guns of the army, and on the following morning he too surrendered.

The United States Government honoured Farragut beyond all precedent by creating for him the rank and title of Vice-Admiral, and then of Admiral. But these were mere recognitions of the past; they brought him no fresh opportunities of service. His adventures were ended, and he had but six years more in which to think and write of them. His career was a singular one to look back upon, for of

all the men who fought in the old wars he was the only one who survived to command in a great battle under the new conditions. He linked the two periods in one of his sayings, when he described the battle of Mobile Bay as "one of the hardest earned victories of my life, and the most desperate battle I ever fought since the days of the old *Essex*."



